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# Jordan Times

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## U.S. selecting military bases for closure

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Defense Department announced Friday it will shut down, or reduce operations at an additional 29 overseas military bases under current plans to trim the size of U.S. forces worldwide. The announcement of overseas closures in Germany, Greece, Japan, the Netherlands and Britain came as details were disclosed at the Pentagon of Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's proposal to shut down 31 major military installations in the United States and scale back or realign another 134. Friday's 15th round of overseas reductions brought to 704 the number of installations where U.S. military activity is being ended, reduced or placed on standby, a 42 per cent reduction since January, 1990, the department said. Of them, 66 are in Europe. Another 32 sites in Europe are being reduced for partial or complete return to host governments, the Pentagon said. The 29 announced Friday were 14 in Germany, four in the Netherlands, two in Britain, eight in Greece and one in Okinawa, Japan, including 2,200 military positions, 150 U.S. civilians and 650 local jobs. They included closing of major U.S. Air Force facilities at Iraklion, Greece, and of Balin Army ammunition depot near Pirmasens, Germany.

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## Palestinian and Israeli killed, soldier found dead

**OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies)** — A Palestinian was shot dead, a missing soldier was found murdered Friday along a major highway, and an Israeli woman was killed by Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip, authorities said.

A hospital in Hebron in the West Bank said Mousa Al Haimoni died from a bullet wound in his stomach. The army said it was checking the report. Residents said he was shot by soldiers during stone-throwing clashes and reported three other Palestinians wounded.

Several hours earlier, the body of Simcha Lavie, 51, was found outside a Palestinian town in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli security said Lavie's body was found in a mini-bus used daily to carry Palestinian workers from the Arab town of Khan Yunis to Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip.

"The murder was accomplished by blows with an axe and knife stabs to the upper portion of the Israeli woman's body," army radio said.

Unlike most Jews in Gaza, she had lived for many years among Palestinians in the area and moved to one of the fortified Jewish settlements only three years ago, Israelis and Arabs said.

The missing-and-found soldier, Yehoshua Friedberg, was shot several times, police said. It was unclear whether the 24-year-old immigrant from Montreal, Canada, was killed or committed suicide.

But a police announcement said just after sundown — the start of the Jewish Sabbath that investigators concluded Friedberg was murdered. Israel Television quoted police as saying an

Arab headress was found near the body.

The woman slain in Gaza was the third Israeli victim in Gaza in 10 days. Her body was found at about 6 a.m. (0400 GMT) in her vehicle parked near the town of Khan Yunis in the southern end of the strip.

The Hebrew daily Maariv recently wrote a story about Ms. Levy, saying that she had lived among Palestinians in the Gaza town of Rafah for years, but moved to a hut on one of the strip's Jewish settlements during the uprising against Israeli occupation.

Settlers in Gaza's Gush Katif area responded to the slaying by announcing they would no longer employ Palestinian labourers anymore. Hundreds of Palestinians work in Gush Katif, a cluster of 16 settlements, doing mainly menial agricultural jobs.

The dead soldier, Friedberg, immigrated in 1991 and served with the Golani infantry brigade. His parents were told he was missing Thursday night, the army said.

Friedberg failed to report back to military duty on Sunday. Hundreds of police and volunteers spent Thursday and Friday combing the rocky hillsides outside Jerusalem.

They found Friedberg's body in a ditch Friday morning along the main Jerusalem Tel Aviv highway, about 12 kilometres from Jerusalem.

Police said there were "signs of a struggle, bloodied hands," and three or four bullet wounds, including one in the chest. But no bullet casings or gun were found.

Friedberg's possessions were also found near the body, officials said.

In Beit Hanoun in Gaza, 24-

year-old Nidal Hussein Nasser died Friday when a bomb he was making exploded, Arab reporters said. The army said it was checking the report.

The killing of Ms. Cavis was claimed by the Red Eagles movement, a faction of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

### Violence fuels debate

The increased violence came as Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was in the United States to discuss plans to restart Middle East peace talks, which had been stalled since Israel expelled some 400 Palestinian activists in December.

Police said they would try to check the violence inside Israel by increasing patrols and put up more roadblocks to check Palestinians entering Israel, Israeli radios said. They also urged Israelis to carry personal weapons, Israel Television reported.

The increased attacks prompted calls for many Israelis for more measures against Palestinians. A poll published by Maariv said 76 per cent objected to permitting Palestinians to continue working in Israel.

Right-wingers blamed Israel's suggestions it would trade land for peace at the Middle East peace talks for the deterioration. Liberal Israelis also expressed alarm.

"We are watching a daily deterioration in the personal safety of every Israeli," columnist Yoel Marcus wrote in the liberal Haaretz daily.

"Isn't it ironic how a modern nation armed with the newest planes, missiles and nuclear power, finds itself threatened by primitive weapons?" he added.

## Arab coordination talks set for March 28 Kaddoumi arrives in Amman, pays tribute to Jordan

By P.V. Vivekanand  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Arab parties to peace talks with Israel will meet at ministerial level in Damascus on March 28 and 29 to discuss the stalled Middle East peace process, Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber said Friday.

Dr. Abu Jaber said Jordan's response to the recently issued American-Russian invitation to the next round of peace talks in Washington in April would be announced after the Damascus meeting.

Dr. Abu Jaber said he received

the invitation to attend the Damascus talks from his Syrian counterpart Farouk Al Sharaa, who called him over the phone last night.

"We will be going to the meeting," he said.

In addition to the Jordanian and Syrian foreign ministers, the two-day meeting will also be attended by the foreign minister of Lebanon and the head of the political department of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Farouk Kaddoumi, as well as the foreign minister of Egypt.

The central theme of the meet-

ing is expected to be how to relaunch the peace process, in limbo since the Dec. 17 Israeli expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians to South Lebanon.

The Palestinians have said that they would stay away from the peace talks until Israel allows the return of the expelled, now stranded between Israeli and Lebanese army lines.

Mr. Kaddoumi, who arrived here Friday after talks in Damascus, told reporters in the Syrian capital that "if Washington and Israel fail to respond to Palestinian demands, the bilateral and multilateral meetings will be sus-

pended."

Jordan has been non-committal on its attendance at the peace talks and Syria and Lebanon have not commented on the issue.

"We have to consult with Arab partners," on the invitation, which sets the ninth round of bilateral talks to begin in Washington on April 20, Dr. Abu Jaber told the Jordan Times Friday. "Hopefully we will come up with a solution" to the hurdles in the talks, he added in a reference to the expellee crisis.

(Continued on page 5)

## Palestinians see American pressure for talks

By Sana Atiyeh  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Palestinian rejection of the joint U.S. and Russian invitation to the ninth round of Mideast peace talks is the clearest signal that the Palestinian leadership is firm about boycotting the next round unless some of their demands, which came in six points discussed with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Jerusalem, are met.

The Palestinians had apparently hoped for more time before the invitations were delivered to resolve some

issues they view as obstacles to achieving any progress in their bilateral negotiations with Israel.

Palestinian officials, who described the issuance of the invitations to the talks in Washington in April 20 as premature, said Washington was apparently trying to pressure the Palestinians into attending the negotiations without receiving substantive Israeli concessions on its Dec. 17 expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians.

"Issuing the invitations at this time, accompanied by Christopher's statements about being encouraged by the Sy-

rians to resume the talks, is obviously to pressure us into attending the talks without receiving our minimal demands," a Palestinian official told the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity.

By ignoring Palestinian demands and issuing the invitations at this time, Palestinian insiders speculate that the U.S. was reacting to a "strongly worded" letter it recently received from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) over U.S. diplomatic contacts with the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, at a time when the U.S. refused to resume its suspended dialogue

with the PLO.

Palestinian analysts, however, said that the invitations had to be issued before Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's visit to Washington, which started Thursday, so as not to "appear as if the date was set by Israel and the U.S."

Palestinian insiders also criticised what they saw as a hasty rejection of the invitation, a decision said to have been taken unilaterally by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat without consulting neither his advisors nor his peace delegates. Palestinian delegates in

(Continued on page 5)

## Exiles rejected reported PLO plan

MAR AL ZOHOOR (Agencies) — Palestinians expelled by Israel rejected Friday a reported plan for their phased return home, insisting all must go back at once.

"The proposed phased return is absolutely rejected by (expellees) especially as we have vowed to God that we will return collectively," Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, leader of the 396 exiles said at their camp in South Lebanon.

A Palestinian official said in Damascus Thursday the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) suggested to Egypt and Syria the exiles should return home to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip by June.

Syria and Egypt worked on new ideas in Cairo Thursday to solve the crisis over the Dec. 17 expulsions and resume Middle East peace talks on April 20 stalled by the expulsions.

The United States and Russia have invited Arabs and Israelis to resume the peace talks but Palestinians refuse to go until Israel pledges not to expel any more people from the occupied territories.

Dr. Rantisi, a 45-year-old paediatrician and founding member of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, said it was impossible Arab states would attend the peace talks before the exiles return home.

"We tell... Arab brothers: Our stand is firm and will not change and we are confident they will stand by us, support our steadfastness and back our position until we return," he said.

The men took advantage of a warm and sunny day at their tent camp on a barren hillside to

(Continued on page 5)

## FBI traces funds it says could have financed New York blast

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Tens of thousands of dollars that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) says financed the World Trade Centre bombing was wired to the two main suspects from Germany, a federal investigator said Friday.

The investigator, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told the Associated Press that bank records in New Jersey showed transfers from Germany to an account held jointly by suspects Mohammad Salameh and Nidal Ayyad.

"We speculate that the money was used for the bombing, possible escape, safe houses and other terrorist activities," said the investigator. "Our main thrust is where the money came from."

Mr. Ayyad was denied bail Friday after a judge agreed with prosecutors that he posed a

"threat" to society.

The Westdeutsche Genossenschaftsbank in Dusseldorf confirmed Friday that on Feb. 17 it transferred \$2,420.07 to a New Jersey bank account jointly held by the two suspects.

Thomas Rindsfresser, a spokesman for the German federal criminal police in Wiesbaden, said U.S. authorities had sent a request for assistance to the justice ministry in Bonn.

The New York Times and New York Newsday, citing unidentified sources, reported Friday that \$8,000 wired to the account of the two suspects has been traced to Germany.

The Record, a New Jersey newspaper, further reported that documents show that two days after the money transfer from the German bank the New Jersey bank logged a \$2,020 cheque that

was written on the account. The documents also show a \$400 withdrawal from a cash machine in Jersey City the same day, the newspaper said.

Defence attorney Thomas Higgins argued at a bail hearing Friday the evidence against Mr. Ayyad was weak and asked for bail as high as \$300,000, saying Mr. Ayyad's relatives could pledge property to secure that amount.

"What the government has proved in this complaint is that Mr. Salameh and Mr. Ayyad knew each other," Mr. Higgins said. "That's about all."

But U.S. Magistrate Dennis Cavanaugh ordered Mr. Ayyad, 25, held without bail.

Mr. Higgins said Mr. Ayyad would remain in the Union County jail in New Jersey, pending an

(Continued on page 5)

## Relatives describe Nidal Ayyad as unlikely bomber

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Nidal Ayyad, the second suspect charged last week with helping the Feb. 26 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York, comes from a background highly unlikely to see him involved in extremist activities, according to his relatives in Amman.

Although a devout Muslim, Mr. Ayyad, a Kuwait-born Palestinian who acquired American nationality in 1991, was "not an Islamist fundamentalist or extremist," said his maternal grandfather, Abdul Aziz Ayyad.

"Nidal is definitely the victim of someone's plot," he added. Sheikh Ayyad and other members of the family confirmed Nidal knew Mohammad Salameh, another Jordanian of Palestinian origin who is also charged in the

bombing case, and that the parents of Mr. Salameh had visited the Ayyads in Amman to inquire about their son.

The parents, friends and relatives of Mr. Salameh also maintain that he was also an unlikely candidate to become an extremist, turning away from a decent living to support his family.

Nidal, 25, is the eldest of six children — four boys and two girls, born to Abdul Rahim Youssef Ayyad and Fatima Abdul Aziz Ayyad in Kuwait in July 1967.

The Ayyads, originally from the West Bank village of Silwad near Ramallah, were settled in Kuwait until the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis forced them out along with the bulk of the Jordanian and Palestinian communities in the emirate.



Nidal Ayyad

Nidal's father, Abdul Rahim, left Kuwait for the U.S. to set up a business there in 1978. Shortly after his arrival in the U.S., he married an Italian-American and acquired American citizenship. The couple have two daughters.

(Continued on page 5)

## Over 6,000 returnees report torture in Kuwait

By Mariam M. Shahin  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Over 6,000 Jordanians and Palestinians who returned to Jordan from Kuwait and other Gulf countries in the post-war period have reported that they were physically harmed, mostly by means of torture, by their Gulf country hosts.

A Department of Statistics survey conducted among over 70,000 returnees in 24,635 households found that at least one family member in every four households reported an incident of torture or violation of "honour."

Of the households surveyed, 6,023 reported that one member of their family has been tortured,

while 114 households reported that the honour of one of their family members had been violated. The survey did not specify other forms of physical harm, but 94 households reported other types of "harm" had been done to their members.

The survey scanned returnees who arrived in Jordan between Aug. 10, 1991 and Dec. 31, 1992.

Yahya Oteibi, head of the Cooperative Society for Gulf War Returnees, said that those who remained in Kuwait after the war were at greater risk of being "hurt" than the majority of the returnees who came to Jordan before the outbreak of the war in January 1991.

"The negative vibrations

against Jordanians and Palestinians were much more obvious after the liberation of Kuwait," Mr. Oteibi told the Jordan Times.

The survey found that 88.59 per cent of returnees came from Kuwait with the rest from other Arab Gulf countries.

Fifty seven per cent of the returnees have settled in Amman, 25 per cent in Zarqa, 12 per cent in Irbid and two per cent in Balqa Governorate while another two per cent settled in the West Bank, the survey found.

An estimated 38 per cent of returnees are under the age of 15 and a big majority of them born in Kuwait.

Those working with Gulf war

returnees in need say that it is difficult to assess the long-term effects of the torture some of them underwent.

Most torture victims, says Dr. Ghazi Abdullah who heads a clinic at the Cooperative Society for the Gulf War Returnees, would like to put their suffering behind them. A good number of the torture victims were burnt with cigarettes, and received blows to their heads and other sensitive parts of their bodies as well as cuts and bruises.

Many, Dr. Ghazi told the Jordan Times, suffer from various nervous disorders which can be traced to imprisonment. Others

(Continued on page 5)

## Yeltsin storms out of congress, to press for referendum

MOSCOW (AP) — President Boris Yeltsin stormed out of congress Friday after lawmakers refused to soften a resolution limiting his authority, and aides said he would call a plebiscite to settle Russia's power dispute.

One aide said the president would not try to disband the communist dominated Congress of People's Deputies, but favoured early parliamentary and presidential elections to end a political impasse paralyzing his reforms.

After leaving the congress, Mr. Yeltsin huddled with regional administrators and his chief rival, Parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, who later told lawmakers: "The situation is not so calm as to allow us to finish the congress today," and they voted to continue the emergency session for a fourth day Saturday.

"We are on the verge of a revolution, on the verge of unpredictable events," Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai told reporters.

By an overwhelming vote of 656-104 with 41 abstentions, congress gave final approval to a resolution giving lawmakers the right to veto Mr. Yeltsin's decrees. The measure also returns to the cabinet the right to introduce legislation, further diminishing the president's authority.

The resolution, which had won initial approval Thursday, also cancelled an agreement between congress and Mr. Yeltsin to hold a referendum on April 11 to have voters resolve the constitutional crisis.

Mr. Yeltsin maintains he needs strong powers to push through free-market reforms.

The vote on the third day of the congress' emergency session came hours after the walkout by a frustrated Yeltsin — the second in as many days. Presidential spokesman Vyacheslav Kostikov said Mr. Yeltsin would not return to the chamber in the Grand Kremlin Palace.

Mr. Yeltsin told lawmakers before walking out that if they did not remove the power-limiting

(Continued on page 5)

## Rabin starts Washington talks with Christopher

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel held a round of talks Friday with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher amid uncertainty whether the Palestinians would boycott Middle East negotiations set to resume on April 20.

They met at a midtown hotel with reporters kept at a distance. Anthony Lake, who heads the U.S. National Security Council, was due to join the talks over lunch.

Mr. Christopher and Mr. Rabin want the negotiations to resume with all Arab delegations participating. And Mr. Christopher predicted on Wednesday that "all the parties will come." He said most leaders in the Middle East thought there was a "one-time opportunity" to settle the Arab-Israeli dispute.

But the Palestinians said Israel must first compromise on 396 Palestinians expelled to Lebanon in mid-December.

A top-ranking Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)

official said Thursday he doubted other Arab delegations would attend without the Palestinians "because the Palestine cause is the core of the Arab-Israeli struggle." Farouk Al Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's political department, spoke in Damascus, Syria.

Hints that Mr. Rabin is looking to compromise with Syria over the Golan Heights have Israeli hardliners jittery enough to wish him bad luck.

"I hope he doesn't succeed," former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of the hardline Likud coalition told Israel Radio. "I don't want the American administration to accept the proposal... that if they put pressure on us, we will quickly give the Arabs the Golan and Gaza."

Mr. Christopher was impressed with President Hafez Al Assad when they met last month in Damascus. It is understood the Syrian leader said he would be content to recover the Golan

(Continued on page 5)

## PLO, Hamas discuss Israeli plans for Gaza

By Mariam M. Shahin  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas last week discussed a unilateral Israeli pullout from the occupied Gaza Strip, Hamas officials said Friday.

"We discussed the possibility of an Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip," Mohammed Nazzari, the Hamas representative in Jordan, told the Jordan Times Friday.

While Mr. Nazzari and senior PLO officials in Tunis both confirmed that "no Israeli offer of a pullout from Gaza has been made," the possibility of such an eventuality has recently gained more voice in Israeli political circles.

PLO official would not go on the record to confirm that they had discussions with Hamas on a possible Israeli pullout from Gaza. There seemed to be different versions of whether Israel was ready for such a pullout and if so what such a withdrawal would entail and how it would

come about.

According to Hamas officials, however, an Egyptian-backed proposal envisages an Israeli unilateral pullout from Gaza and dismantlement of the Israeli settlements in the coastal strip.

According to the Egyptian plan, Palestinian police force would then take over from the Israeli occupation forces, Hamas sources say.

"We did not say there was a proposal or a decision, we simply discussed the possibilities," said Mr. Nazzari.

Hamas, whose increasing visibility in diplomatic circles has angered the PLO, says that it opposes such a proposal.

"We would prefer if U.N. peacekeeping troops moved into the Gaza Strip and monitored elections and then the U.N. would move out," said Mr. Nazzari.

If elections were held in Gaza, Mr. Nazzari claimed, 40 per cent of the votes would go to Hamas. "Some of our people in the occupied territories say it would even

(Continued on page 5)



## Egypt's mosque assault — second time around

ASWAN, Egypt (R) — Egyptian police have twice stormed the Al Rahman Mosque in seven years. The first time, they seized Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the spiritual mentor of Egypt's militants and in the second, they rounded up his men.

Security officials said the sweep against militants of Gama'a al Islamiya (Islamic Group) inside Al Rahman Mosque in this southern tourist town was deliberately ferocious to kill any chance for the militants to rise up again.

"The police have carried out a cleansing operation. This was a lesson for the militants not to do anything in the future. They have been taught a lesson," Aswan's Director of Tourism Mahmoud Fahmy told Reuters.

A lawyer acting for some of the 87 militants arrested after surviving Tuesday's mosque assault accused the security forces of deliberately trying to kill as many as possible of the 200 worshippers packed into the building.

"Considering that Aswan is an important resort that attracts big numbers of tourists, the government wanted to show an iron fist. It decided to abort these groups which it felt were starting to cause danger..."

"It decided to hit them in their cradle before they could be able to carry out any acts of aggression. It suddenly felt that they have become a danger," he added.

"The security forces entered the mosque to physically eliminate as many people as possible. It was not to arrest them because the security bodies know exactly where they live and have definite information about their movements," Hassan Mohammad Hassan said.

"If they had wanted to arrest them, they could have done it without a single drop of blood," he said. "But the aim was to terrorise all those who believe in their ideas."

After the assault, many militants shaved their beards and replaced their white robes with trousers and shirts to avoid being detained by police, residents said.

Cairo violence

In Cairo, security forces have promised a war to the death against militants.

Nine militants were killed and 41 were wounded when police forces burst into the militant-controlled Al Rahman Mosque where up to 200 men, women and children were praying Tuesday night.

Islamic Group militants, led by Sheikh Abdul Rahman, a blind preacher in exile in the United States, are fighting to turn Egypt into a purist Islamic state and have devastated its tourist industry with attacks on foreigners.

Security sources and lawyers said security forces had surrounded Al Rahman Mosque first in 1986. They stormed it and arrested Sheikh Abdul Rahman with 23 of his followers. The preacher was freed five days later and was flown to Cairo for interrogation.

In 1981 the sheikh was tried but acquitted on charges of sanctifying the assassination of President Anwar Sadat. He has been living in the United States since 1990.

Two of his alleged followers have been arrested in connection with the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York last month in which five people were killed and more than 1,000 were wounded.

Security officials said militant activity grew over the past two years in Aswan, which is the major tourist centre in Egypt's southernmost province.

Followers from nearby towns and villages would flock to Al Rahman Mosque every week to take part in meetings and seminars debating Islamic laws and edicts, they said.

Residents said militant ideas were spreading fast among youngsters who were being told by fundamentalist clerics that foreign tourists "were infidels" and that working in the industry was "a sin" because foreigners were corrupt.

The sources said the number of militants in Aswan and nearby villages was up to 1,000.



A Somali child looks at an American Marine patrolling a Mogadishu shantytown (AFP photo)

## Somali warlords prepare for reconciliation meeting

MOGADISHU (R) — Somalia's warring factions Wednesday fanned out proposals they plan to present at a landmark national reconciliation conference next week.

The U.S.-led multinational task force said it was maintaining a high state of readiness ahead of the March 15 U.N.-sponsored talks in Ethiopia in any case any group tried to cause trouble aimed at disrupting the conference.

Farouk Mawlawi, U.N. spokesman in Somalia, told Reuters all the warlords heading the country's 16 factions had been invited and agreed to attend.

"As of today all of them have agreed to go to Addis Ababa for the talks," he said.

In Mogadishu, the main warlords, Mohammad Farah Aided and his rival, self-styled President Ali Mahdi Mohamed, met with their aides in separate meetings to formulate their proposals for the conference.

"We are busy working and re-working our proposals for the meeting," Mr. Aided aide Issa

Mohammad Said told Reuters. U.N. officials said that in the north of Mogadishu, Mr. Ali Mahdi was chairing a cabinet meeting called to work out a final document for his movement.

Gen. Aided and Mr. Ali Mahdi halted a two-year blood feud in December under intense U.N. and U.S. pressure after U.S.-led military forces landed in Somalia to protect food aid for the starving.

Gen. Aided is going to Addis Ababa Sunday with special demands that he and his allies receive special status at the reconciliation conference to reflect their role in toppling dictator Mohammad Siad Barre.

Mr. Ali Mahdi on the other hand, has accepted U.N. proposals that the talks also group religious leaders and elders in an attempt to set up a broad base for discussion as possible.

Somalia collapsed into civil war after Mr. Siad Barre's downfall in 1991 and Mr. Ali Mahdi and Gen. Aided both feel they have a legitimate claim to be the next head of state.

The U.S.-led forces said they were on the lookout for trouble ahead of the meeting.

"We are out on alert but I can tell you we are in a high state of readiness. It's too quiet and we're getting suspicious just to case someone out there tries to cause trouble in order to disrupt the conference," Fred Peck, U.S. military spokesman in Somalia, told reporters.

Colonel Peck said the U.S.-led forces, due to hand over command to a new United Nations force, hoped the conference would produce concrete results on issues such as disarmament and the setting up of political structures in the country.

As many as 28,000 of the 36,000 troops in Operation Restore Hope, launched on Dec. 9, were Americans.

But the new force, made up of contingents from 20 countries, will be more diverse. U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali has set May 1 as the date for the transfer of command to the new 28,000-strong multinational force.

## Peres voices concern over German far-right

BONN (R) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Thursday he was concerned at rising support for the far-right in Germany but he believed Germans had stood the test of democracy.

Mr. Peres, summing up a two-day visit, said he found that German leaders were also worried about the gains of the anti-foreigner Republicans in a state election last weekend and a recent wave of racist violence.

"But when we see the results of elections, we must also take a good look at the reaction of the German people," he told a news conference.

The Republicans, led by a former soldier in Hitler's Waffen-SS, won up to 15 per cent in some areas a Hesse state in the first barometer of voter sympathies since more than 2,280 right-wing attacks killed 17 people last year.

Mr. Peres said repeated rallies against racism last year by hundreds of thousands of Germans had helped reassure Israel that the majority did not agree with the far-right.

"Needless to say we don't share the German's pessimism about Germany. We don't accept the fashionable feeling in Germany that you have to start everyday with a mood of 'bonjour tristesse' (sadness)," he said.

Mr. Peres, accompanied by a business delegation, signed a bilateral agreement with Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel Tuesday pledging closer economic and technological ties.

They agreed to set up a joint council for cooperation in environmental technology and to double funds for a scientific research and development foundation to 300 million marks (\$180 million), to be split between the two states.

Discussing the environmental accord, he said: "We are struggling against the desertification of the Middle East. We have an increase in population and a decline in the fertility of the land."

Mr. Kinkel said Germany would try harder to increase and improve Israel's trade agreements with the European Community.

Mr. Peres said Israel wanted to see a renegotiation of a 1975 economic cooperation agreement to give it a better chance to compete on European markets.

Israel purchased \$9 billion of EC goods annually but only \$4.5 billion worth of Israeli exports went to Europe, Mr. Peres said. Equally Israel bought \$2.25 billion of goods from Germany but sold only around \$1.25 billion.

Environment Minister Klaus Töpel said Israel on March 16 to 19 for talks with Israeli government leaders and scientists about projects to protect the environment, his ministry said in a statement.

## MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

### Morocco denies mistreatment of prisoners

RABAT (R) — The Justice Ministry Thursday denied local press reports that prisoners in Moroccan jails were mistreated or had died as a result of bad conditions. In a statement carried by the official news agency MAP, the ministry said there was no discrimination between prisoners, except that adults and children, men and women, were detained separately. Relatives of political prisoners told a news conference last month that 21 prisoners had died in 1991-92 as a result of the conditions of detention. "Apart from rare cases of suicide, all other cases were due to natural causes, which were the subject of medical inquiries to establish the cause of death and type of treatment," the ministry statement said. In an apparent reference to political prisoners, the ministry said prisoners who have demanded special treatment, the ministry said, "cannot grant privileges or facilities to certain detainees without it." It said doctors and dentists, prison regulations forbid favouritism. "It said doctors and dentists had been recruited to treat inmates and the seriously ill were taken to outside hospitals. It added that all prisoners were allowed to pursue studies and in the last five years 5,855 persons won diplomas while in custody."

### Australian troops kill Somali bandit

MOGADISHU (R) — An Australian patrol shot dead a Somali bandit near the southern town of Baidoa Thursday, the U.S. military said Friday. The six bandits had opened fire on the patrol, part of the multinational force sent to Somalia last year to stop bandits looting relief food for the hungry. "The patrol returned fire, killing one Somali. The remaining bandits fled into the bush and the Australians are continuing to seek them," a U.S. military report said. The death was the only casualty in a series of minor incidents of shooting between the foreign troops and Somali gunmen over the past two days.

### Syria to pay April salaries early

DAMASCUS (R) — Finance Minister Khaled Mahayni said Thursday that he asked all finance departments to pay the April salaries for government employees from March 20, about 10 days early, for the feast of Eid al Fitr. Salaries in Syria are paid at the beginning of each month.

### Children make toy 'bomb' in Cairo

CAIRO (R) — Two children endeared themselves to the U.S. embassy in Cairo earlier this week by making a toy "bomb" at an apartment block where American families live, a diplomat said Thursday. He said the doorman found the device, made of two mineral water bottles and some noise-making fireworks, and showed it to a U.S. officer, who took it to the embassy for checks. A security official established it was just a toy. Foreigners living in Cairo are on the alert because Muslim militants fighting to turn Egypt into a purist Islamic state have been attacking tourists and have threatened that their next target might be foreign businesses.

### German policeman shoots dead Turkish Imam

HAMBURG, Germany (R) — An Imam attached to Turkey's consulate here was shot dead by a German plainclothes policeman after pointing a gun at him, police said Thursday. Turkey's ambassador in Bonn, Onur Oeymen, said he was waiting for investigations to finish and that he had complete confidence in the German authorities. He described the 41-year-old man as a diplomat and said he had the right to carry a weapon for self-defence. Police said the Turk was bending over a German man dying from a shot wound when the plain clothes policeman, who had been alerted by the sound of shots, shouted at him. The diplomat raised a gun and aimed at the policeman, they said. The policeman then shot him dead. No details about the dead German were released. A police spokeswoman said no other weapons had been found, adding that it was still not clear what had happened.

### Bangladesh offers to export manpower to Kuwait

DHAKA (AP) — Bangladesh Thursday offered to recruit more manpower to rebuild war-torn Kuwait. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia told a special envoy of Kuwait's Emir, Dr. Ahmad Abdullah Al Rabeil, Kuwait's education minister, brought a message from Sheikh Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah thanking Bangladesh for its support to his emirate during the Gulf war. Bangladesh had sent more than 2,000 troops to the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq during the Gulf war. Nearly 70,000 Bangladeshi workers who were forced to return home from the oil-rich country during the war have been reemployed.

## Iran may be greater U.S. enemy than Iraq

By Alan Elsner

WASHINGTON — Iran may turn out to be a greater threat to U.S. interests in the long term than its neighbour Iraq, some officials and analysts believe.

While Iraq is subject to tight international sanctions, constant surveillance and intrusive inspections, Iran has been quietly rearming and is pursuing an active nuclear weapons programme, U.S. officials say.

It has also emerged as the key force opposing Arab-Israeli peace efforts, while bankrolling some of the most dangerous factions in the Middle East.

A State Department last week branded Iran the world's "most dangerous state sponsor of terrorism" and accused the Iranian intelligence service of involvement in assassinations and

bombings in the Middle East, Europe and Latin America in the past year.

"Iraq is more a problem of one person — Saddam Hussein," said one State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Iran is a problem because of the ideology of an entire regime. Therefore one could argue that in the long term Iran will be more of a problem than Iraq," he said.

When Terry Anderson, the last American hostage held in Beirut by Iranian-backed guerrillas, was released at the end of 1991, it looked as if relations between Tehran and Washington might improve.

But neither side made a move towards the other and relations today are, if anything, characterised by even greater mutual hostility and suspicion.

Moderate Iranians advo-

cating warmer relations with the West may have been weakened when Tehran did not receive the kind of recognition they expected for its release of hostages and its strict neutrality during the Gulf war.

"There are Iranians who say they made serious concessions and did not get anything in return," said Shireen Hunter, an analyst with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think-tank.

For other, more radical elements, anti-Americanism and anti-Zionism remain the sacred legacy of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Shocked by Iraq's success in building a nuclear weapons programme that came close to producing a bomb, the United States has invested considerable diplomatic efforts to stall what it believes

is a similar Iranian effort.

"We believe they are working on a nuclear weapons programme which is at a very early stage and we believe we have had some success in restraining and retarding their programme," said the State Department official.

But it has proved impossible to prevent Iran acquiring some conventional weapons that Washington did not have.

Russia sold Iran three Kilo class submarines last year, of which one has been delivered so far. It is stationed near the Strait of Hormuz, a major oil waterway.

"About the only thing they could do with that kind of submarine is sink regional merchant shipping. We don't like that," said the official.

On the political front, Iran has waged an offensive against the Arab-Israeli

peace process since the Madrid conference of October 1991 that has emerged as a major irritant to Washington.

Even while the Madrid conference was in session, Iran organised a rival conference of "rejectionists." Its chief Middle East surrogate has been Hizbollah guerrillas in South Lebanon and Hamas activists in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Backed by tens of millions of dollars of Iranian money, the groups have emerged as serious threats to the peace talks.

Israel's decision to expel 415 suspected Hamas activists to South Lebanon last December has produced a three-month interruption in negotiations. Even if they resume next month, Hamas has proved it is a factor to be reckoned with.

## Zambia breaks links with Iran, Iraq

LUSAKA, Zambia (AP) — Zambia has severed diplomatic relations with Iran and Iraq, claiming agents from those countries assisted in an opposition plot to topple the government.

Foreign Affairs Minister Vernon Mwaanga told parliament he summoned the ambassadors from Iran and Iraq to his office earlier and told them they were being expelled.

Mr. Mwaanga said diplomatic ties had been broken because "as a sovereign state we cannot and will not tolerate outside interference in our internal affairs."

Last Thursday, President Frederick Chiluba declared a state of emergency in Zambia and said relations with Iran and Iraq would be reviewed.

Government officials have since said agents from those

countries were behind a plot codenamed Operation Zero Option by the opposition United National Independence Party (UNIP) to overthrow the government.

The aim was to make Zambia ungovernable through strikes, riots and lawlessness.

Under the emergency, police detained without charge 26 UNIP members, including two of former President Kenneth Kaunda's sons for alleged involvement in the plot.

UNIP denied the charges. Zambia's foreign minister made his announcement in the 150-member parliament during a debate on whether to extend the state of emergency a further three months.

Mr. Chiluba, a trade union leader, came to power in a 1991

election that restored democracy to the impoverished southern African nation.

The emergency has worried Western donors and been criticised by human rights organisations.

Mr. Kaunda ruled under a state of emergency from independence in 1964 until he was ousted in 1991. He used sweeping powers of arrest without trial to crush political opponents.

### Iraq expresses regret

Iraq expressed regret over the Zambian decision to expel its diplomats, the Iraqi News Agency reported.

A Foreign Ministry statement denied involvement in Zambia's internal affairs and said the government's action "exposed political purposes."

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:30 Les Aventures de L'espèce

19:30 Envoyé Spécial

19:30 News in French

19:30 Fenêtre sur

19:30 News in Hebrew

20:30 News in Arabic

20:30 America's Funniest Home Videos

21:00 Perspectives

21:30 Science Workshop

22:30 News in English

22:30 Feature Film: "Night of the Hunter"

### PRAYER TIMES

04:29 Fajr

05:46 (Sunrise) Dhuhr

11:45 Asr

15:08 Maghreb

19:42 'Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifeth, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terraviva Church Tel. 623566

### Church of the Annunciation Tel.

623541

Assiout Church Tel. 630851. Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 622208

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be cold and partly cloudy, and winds will be westerly light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 2/20

Aqaba 1/13

Jordan Valley 6/19

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 10, Aqaba 18. Humidity readings: Amman 76 per cent, Aqaba 55 per cent.

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Ghazi Abu Sheikh 752405

Dr. Adnan Al Zughoul 898140

Dr. Wael Kharrat 615648

Dr. Fakhri Bilal 663412

Fires pharmacy 661912

Pedrows pharmacy 778336

Al Asma pharmacy 670035

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shamsani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

IBID:

Dr. Issam Al Saleh (—)

Dr. Al Quds Pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Akram Al Haddad (—)

Khalifeh pharmacy 983417

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Fire Brigade 891228

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Water and Sewerage 661176

Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality 845845

Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Repairs 661101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

### HOSPITALS

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power 636381

Company 06-53200

RJ Flight Information 06-53200

Oceana Air Ind. Airport 06-53200

AMMAN:

Hussain Medical Centre 81381322

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642816

Aishah Maternity, J. Amn. 642412

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Mallat, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shamsani 664174

Suncoast Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Musharraf Hospital 667277

Al-Ahli, Abdali 66612757

Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 771013

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 771013

Army, Marja 89161151

Oceana Airs Hospital 60224050

### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)

06:15 Dhaka (RJ)

06:15 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ)

06:45 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)

10:00 New Delhi (RJ)

10:15 Beirut (RJ)

10:30 Colombo (RJ)

10:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

17:55 London, Berlin (RJ)

18:15 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)

18:30 Bangkok (RJ)

18:55 Helsinki, Aqaba (RJ)

### Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:30 Sanaa (Y)

17:55 Paris, Damascus (AF)

19:00 Dubai, Damascus (EM)

19:25 Rome, Beirut (AZ)

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)3300-5, where it should always be verified.

### DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:15 Beirut (RJ)

11:30 Aqaba, Helsinki (RJ)

11:30 Amsterdam, Paris, Brussels (RJ)

11:30 Aqaba, Helsinki (RJ)

11:50 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)

12:45 Cairo (RJ)

20:00 Larnaca (CY)

20:30 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)

### MARKET PRICES

Apples (lower price in fcs per kg)

Apple 700/550

Banana 700/700

Banana (Mukammal) 640/700

Cabbage 1100/900

Carrot 100/50

Cauliflower 180/120

Cucumbers (large) 150/100

Cucumbers (small) 300/200

Eggplant 280/180

Garlic 800/600

Lemon 300/200

Mint 440/350

Mint (dry) 100

Onion (dry) 210/180

Onion (green) 480/130

Orange 220/160

Pepper (hot) 480/130

Pepper (sweet) 800/600

Potato 600/400

Tomato 220/160

Spinach 120/60





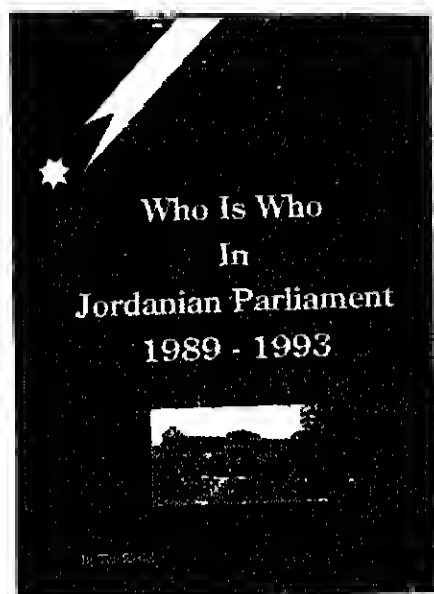
His Majesty King Hussein joined worshippers in attending Friday prayers at King Abdullah Mosque in Amman. The King and worshippers listened to the sermon delivered by Ministry of Awaqaf and Islamic Affairs Secretary General Ahmad Helayyel. Also attending Friday prayers were members of the Royal Family, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, Royal Court Chief Khalid Al Karaki, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, Private Chamberlain Prince Ali Ben Nayef, a number of cabinet ministers and senior military and civil officials (Petra photo)

## New book outlines make-up of both houses of Parliament

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As far as personality profiles go, "Who is Who in Jordanian Parliament 1989-1993," a recently released booklet, is a commendable effort since it is the first of its kind published in English.

The 150-page paperback provides a brief outline of the background of the members of the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament based on information provided by the parliamentarians themselves, reference books and data collected by its author Tim Riedel, a student of political science.



Presented in a blue cover with a superimposition of the Jordanian flag, the book is a useful reference for many who would like to get a first look at the composition of the Jordanian Parliament.

The publication, financed by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, an institution affiliated with the Social Democratic Party of Germany, provides basic information on each of the 80 elected members of the Lower House and 40 appointed members of the Upper House.

Included are details such as date and place of birth, religion, ethnic origin, constituency, educational background, profession, foreign language proficiency (if any), family status, membership in parliamentary committees and political orientation (wherever identified) of the 120 parliamentarians alongside their photographs.

Conspicuous by its absence though is the voting record of the parliamentarians on issues indicative of their political and social outlooks and approach to financial issues.

The bibliography of the book lists as references personal interviews, data provided by the House of Parliament, Adnan Bayoun's "Who is Who (1985)", Samer Hijazi's "Encyclopedia on Jordanian Personalities" (1992), and Hani Kheir's "An Illustrated Historical Survey" (1990), as well as various issues of the Jordan Times.

Edited and published by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and printed in Jordan, the booklet is released at a time when international attention on Jordan is on the rise, if only because of the fast pace that the

democratisation has picked up, and could go a considerable way in familiarising first-comers with the political colour and structure of the Kingdom's parliament.

Probably because English is a foreign language for its author, shortcomings are also evident in terms of linguistics and structure, something that could be rectified if there was to be a reprint of the booklet.

A brief note introduces the author, Mr. Riedel, as born in Munich in 1969. A student of political science and law at the Free University in Berlin, Mr. Riedel has worked with Friedrich Ebert Foundation as part of his studies. He is said to be specialising on the systems of internal politics, studying the political party and system and procedures of decision-making in Jordan.

Who is Who in Jordanian Parliament 1989-1993, Riedel, Tim, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, pp150, Garabi Printing Press, Amman, 1993 (price not mentioned).

## Sales tax to affect previously tax-free items

AMMAN (J.T.) — A special committee in charge of drawing up lists of items subject to the newly-introduced sales tax will hold a meeting today (Saturday) to discuss lists of taxable items, a report in Thursday's issue of the Arabic daily Al Rai said.

The report quoted officials as saying that the first list of items subject to the sales tax includes 113 items, and other lists are being reconsidered.

Of the first 113 items, 17 will be subject to tax for the first time. These include tourist transport services; car rental services; advertisements; audits; consultancy, engineering and legal consultation services; express mail services; security and protection services; translation services; beauty salons, hairdressers and barber services; wedding; hall rentals and video rentals.

## U.N. official apologises for comment 'unwittingly' offending Palestinians

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A senior U.N. official has apologised to Palestinian colleagues over comments seen as insulting Yasser Arafat during a routine meeting in Amman, but the issue does not seem to have been settled despite U.N. assertions that the matter was closed.

Angela Williams, director of relief and social services of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), sent the "apology" to the area staff union of the agency in Amman after a formal complaint was sent to the UNRWA headquarters in Vienna.

The comments which triggered the controversy were made by Mrs. Williams on the appearance of a fully-bearded cafeteria worker who served tea at an internal UNRWA meeting in Amman on Feb. 25.

The appearance of cafeteria workers "should not be disgusting to us as participants in the meeting in particular," it said. "Please note that such behaviour has been considered by us as an unjustified insult addressed to all Palestinians represented worldwide by President Arafat."

Williams, who has an excellent record of devotion to her work, he told the Jordan Times. "What matters to us is that such offending comments came from a person who occupies a very senior position in the agency."

Mr. Daoud declined further comment saying he was "bound by any decision that the staff union would adopt."

UNRWA insiders said that while the performance record of Mrs. Williams, a British national who has been with the agency for over 20 years, had no blemish whatsoever, many agency officials were offended in the past by her "patronising approach."

"Her behaviour is very condescending," said an UNRWA employee, who declined to be identified. "In her dealings with her Middle Eastern colleagues, she appears to be always indirectly reminding us — Palestinians and others — that we should be thankful that the Europeans, particularly the British, were the donors and we the recipients of help."

apologised in a letter (that) at the meeting she made a mistake. "Our view is that the apology has removed the misunderstanding," he added, without elaboration.

According to UNRWA sources in Amman, Mrs. Williams' letter expressed "regret" over her comments, which were "not intended at insulting anyone."

Mrs. Williams said she was "saddened and shocked" that she had "unwittingly offended" the "sensitive feelings and perceptions" of those present during the meeting.

She said she had made the comments in the context of discussing the "image" and "visual perceptions" of UNRWA.

"I offer you my sincerest apologies," the source quoted the letter as saying. "Asked whether the agency considered the issue as closed, Mr. Pyrich said from Vienna: 'Yes.' But UNRWA staff members in Amman said they had neither accepted nor rejected the apology. "It is a matter to be decided by the staff union," said Mr. Daoud, one of the signatories to the complaint. "We have nothing against Mrs.

Williams, who has an excellent record of devotion to her work, he told the Jordan Times. "What matters to us is that such offending comments came from a person who occupies a very senior position in the agency."

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"It is a matter to be decided by the staff union," said Mr. Daoud, one of the signatories to the complaint. "We have nothing against Mrs.

## Minister, media chief attend film production meeting in France

AMMAN (Petra) — Information Minister Mahmoud Al Sharif Friday left for Paris to take part in a symposium on production of cinema, radio, and television programmes in the Arab World.

The symposium, to start in the French capital today (Saturday), will also review prospects of cooperation between Europe and the Arab World in producing programmes and films.

Taking part in the symposium will be several Arab information ministers and senior French journalists.

Director of the Jordanian Company for Radio, Television and Cinema Production Jawad Maraga also left for Paris Friday to take part in the symposium, organised by the Paris-based Arab World Institute for Cinema, Radio and T.V. production.

The symposium will discuss three major topics: policies on audio-visual programmes in the Arab World, Arab audio-visual programmes in the West and prospects of cooperation between the Arab World and Europe, particularly France.

## JD20m slated for new Irbid water line projects

AMMAN (Petra) — The Irbid Water Management Department has floated three tenders worth JD 20 million to finance water projects in the governorate, according to department Director Ali Al Qudah.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Qudah said the new projects will improve, modernise and expand existing water networks and avoid waste.

He said the Irbid water project accounts for JD 9.9 million, and will serve about 185,000 people living in the town.

the water situation in the town, provide a 24-hour potable water supply to residents.

The second project will be carried out in Ramtha at a cost of JD 3.7 million, according to Mr. Qudah.

Under the project, new water pipelines will be installed and all homes will be linked to the new network.

It will serve more than 40,000 people, and also benefit 20,000 people living in the neighbouring towns and villages of Amrawa, Shajara, Doebah and Turrah.

northern Jordan Valley area and Ajloun district.

Um Qasme Springs water project, costing JD 1.7 million, will benefit residents in Rajeb and the neighbouring villages.

Mr. Qudah said galvanised polyethylene pipes will be used in all the projects because of their durability.

Commenting on citizens' complaints that water bills are exaggerated and that figures appearing on the bills are not realistic, Mr. Qudah said the Water Authority has recently conducted maintenance work on the water lines and replaced part of the old network, which will result in minimum water waste and less complaints about bills.

## JNRCS head attends meetings in Geneva

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) is participating in the meetings of the higher committee entrusted with studying the future of the International movements of the Red Cross and Red Crescent which began in Geneva Wednesday. At the 5-day meeting the committee will discuss several issues including external factors that affect the future of the movement and preparations for an international conference to be held by philanthropic societies and signatories of the Geneva Conventions. The conference was scheduled to be held last year in Budapest, but was postponed until further notice because of pressures exerted by the U.S. and Israel to prevent Palestine's delegation from participating in the conference. JNRCS President Mohammad Al Hadid is representing Jordan at the Geneva conference.

Chinese painting handmade VASE different sizes.



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### HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Crown Prince prays in Naour

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan attended Friday prayers at Naour Grand Mosque. The Prince and worshippers listened to the sermon which focussed on the lessons learnt from the Badr Battle. Attending the prayer also were deputies from Naour and several senior military and civil officials.

#### Sharif Zeid calls for drought study in badia

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker is expected to pass a decision authorising a subsidy and assistance to livestock breeders in the Badia region based on a study of the impact of drought in that area. A drought committee will meet Saturday to study the subject and propose practical solutions, in line with the Prime Minister's instructions.

#### British envoy arrives in Amman

AMMAN (Petra) — Assistant Under-Secretary of the British Foreign Office for Middle Eastern Affairs Michael Burton arrived in Amman Friday on a three-day visit to Jordan during which he will meet with senior officials for talks on the latest developments in the Middle East peace talks and Jordanian-British relations. The British officials was received at the airport by Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry Hussein Hamami and the British ambassador to Jordan.

### WHAT'S GOING ON

#### EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition entitled "The Present Islamic World in Photos and News" at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST).

#### NEW IN AMMAN

#### AL-RABIYA Furnished Apartments

- NEWLY FURNISHED APARTMENTS IN ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL RESIDENT AREAS OF AMMAN WITHIN A WALKING DISTANCE TO SHOPPING AREAS.
- FULL HOUSEKEEPING SERVICES.
- BUSINESS SERVICES.
- DAILY, WEEKLY, ANNUAL, LEASES.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS, TEL.: 691401 FAX: 692238 AMMAN - JORDAN

## Official to participate in U.S. educational reform programme

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of the Ministry of Education Planning, Development and Research Department Mohammad Ayasrah left for Washington Thursday to represent Jordan in a month-long American programme on education innovations and reform, organised by the United States Information Agency (USIA).

In a departure statement, Dr. Ayasrah said the programme will enable participants to obtain first-hand information on innovations in the U.S. educational system, which have been achieved through the employment of modern technologies and concept.

He added that the programme includes field visits to various sites, and meetings with school principals, teachers, students and parents.

Participants will also meet with federal education officials, participate in a seminar Boston on the training of secondary school teachers, and the role of universities and other educational institutions in this process. They will also have the chance to acquire information on issues related to human resources training, including in-service training of teachers, methods of evaluation and the effect ethnic diversity might have on the educational process in the classroom.

Taking part in the programme are representatives of 13 countries, including Jordan.

“Four KLM flights to Europe?”

“Sure thing, KLM’s spreading its wings.”

Schedule of Apr 1993	FL No	Departure	Arrival	Remarks
Amman to Amsterdam	KL546	07:30	0650	non stop
Amsterdam to Amman	KL518	13:10		via ECA
Amman to Amsterdam	KL545	17:40		non stop
Amsterdam to Amman	KL517	21:45		via ECA
Amman to Amsterdam	KL545	22:35		non stop
Amsterdam to Amman	KL517	01:45		non stop

Now that KLM has announced four flights to Amsterdam and one flight to Dubai every week, you can look forward to enjoying more of the services and quality that has made KLM a legend in the airline industry since 1919. What more could you ask for?

For further information, please contact: KLM Royal Dutch Airlines on tel. 622175, 622176, 655267 or your travel agent.

The Reliable Airline **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines



## Jordan Times

An Independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1972.

الصحف الأردنية المستقلة المنشورة بالإنجليزية من المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

## Britain's opening more

BRITAIN'S DECISION to resume ministerial-level contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation could be a harbinger of more positive developments on the road to full integration of the PLO into the peace process. The British move follows on the heels of the Belgian decision to upgrade the diplomatic status of the PLO office in Brussels into a fully-recognised diplomatic mission. There is little doubt that the British and Belgian moves have the blessing of the rest of the European Community nations and enjoys the tacit approval of Washington as well. This Western "rehabilitation" of the PLO must also be seen in the wider context of the ongoing peace negotiations between Israel and the various Arab parties and the simmering conflict between the mainstream PLO and the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. While Fateh and Hamas are not exactly at loggerheads over the Palestinian-expellees crisis, they seem too diametrically opposed to each other on the viability of the entire peace process in the Middle East. The Western capitals' collective recognition of the PLO as a full partner in the quest for peace in the area is a vote of confidence in the Palestinian factions that made a clear commitment in favour of the peace option. Washington will certainly follow the European initiative by extending its support more openly to the forces of peace. This the U.S. can do by resuming its interrupted dialogue with the PLO in the near future. More important and relevant than this belated Western tilt towards the PLO is the Israeli final posture on the subject. Notwithstanding Israeli officials' professed anxiety over the moves by London and Brussels to bestow recognition on the PLO as an integral element in the peace equation, there are sound reasons to believe that this protestation may not be Israel's bottom line on the issue. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has effectively set the stage for an early Israeli decision to accept dealing with the Palestinian leadership when he engineered the repeal of a 1986 law that forbade contact with the PLO. The Israeli Labour-led government must recognise that shunning the PLO for much longer would only make open the field wider for Palestinian rejectionist of the peace talks. The faster the decision to accepting the PLO as the Palestinian "government" that is totally and unequivocally committed to the cause of peace the sooner real progress in the peace process will be achieved. Pretending otherwise would be playing into the hands of the elements that are waging war against peace in the area on both sides of the divide.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RAI Arabic daily said the continuation of the sanctions on Iraq is not caused by its violations of any U.N. Security Council Resolutions, but by Western countries' envy of Iraq's swiftness and ability to reconstruct what was destroyed by the allied forces during the Gulf war. Dimitri Pericos, head of the nuclear team of experts inspecting Iraq's nuclear capabilities, was quoted in Al Rai's editorial as saying that Iraq's reconstruction capabilities show the need for having nuclear inspection teams in Iraq on the long run. "Thus, it is clearly demonstrated that the continuation of the siege and the inspection campaigns in Iraq are not prompted by violations it is committing or weapons it is concealing, but is rather due to its ability to reconstruct quickly, as if it was supposed to stand unable to repair war damages and to beg for others' help to build its infrastructure once again," newspaper said.

It described Mr. Pericos' mentality in dealing with Iraq as racial, saying he wants Iraq to be a backward country. This kind of mentality seeks to achieve that objective in daylight through the siege, inspection campaigns and threats, it added. Had the Arabs thought of this well, the paper said, they would have realised that this aggressive mentality targets them all, and that the enemies of progress do not want for any Arab to build his homeland through science and serious work. These enemies, the paper added, want the Arabs to be greedy consumers who eat and wear what they import from others. The paper continued that the enemies of progress are practicing their tyranny on Iraq while the Arabs are watching as if they are not being stabbed with the same dagger. It is time for the Arabs to rise up and reach out to each other to protect themselves from the enemies of progress so as to be able to reconstruct the Arab order and make of themselves a technological, economic and scientific power, the paper concluded.

Al Dostour Arabic daily said in an editorial that the Arab parties to the Middle East peace talks have shown some degree of unity by postponing a decision on participating in the ninth round of the peace talks till after the Arab parties meet. The Arab decision was satisfactorily harmonious despite the rejection by the Palestinian side to accept the invitation sent by the co-sponsors of the peace talks, the U.S. and Russia, the paper said. Al Dostour said postponing decision on the issue has prevented the occurrence of a significant collapse in the fragile ground on which the Arab parties to the negotiations are standing and prevented a political crack which was a covert target of Israel since the start of the peace process in Madrid in October 1991. The newspaper expressed hope that the Arabs will utilise all their power and good relations with the co-sponsors of the peace talks then practice the necessary pressures to remove the obstacle impeding the resumption of the peace talks, represented Israel's expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians from the occupied territories last December. Consequently, the newspaper concluded, the 40-day period separating the Arabs from scheduled date for the talks constitutes a practical test for the proficiency of Arab diplomacy and its ability to improve the terms of negotiations.

By Steve Holland  
Reuters

WASHINGTON — The United States may be taking a more aggressive stance against Serb advances in Bosnia but remains cool to the kind of military intervention U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has in mind.

For the past year, through the end of the Bush administration and the start of the Clinton presidency, U.S. officials and commentators of all sides have warned that a "quagmire" like the Vietnam war may lie in store if U.S. troops are ordered into action in Bosnia.

Defence Secretary Les Aspin says this fear permeates not just the Pentagon but exists "throughout the U.S. government, throughout the population of the United States."

Dr. Boutros Ghali thus touched a nerve when he said U.N. member states, including the United States, must be ready to send troops against Bosnian Serb forces if they refuse to cede territory that they would have to give up under an international peace plan now being negotiated.

While Mr. Aspin did not rule out U.S. participation in such a force, White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos indicated the United States wants a more traditional peacekeeping role.

"We've had no discussions at all of anything beyond what we've said in the past, which is

that we would contemplate the use of U.S. forces to enforce an agreement that is already made," Mr. Stephanopoulos said. "We are not going to get involved. We've had no discussions on using U.S. troops in any kind of peacekeeping mission."

To coincide with its mercy mission of parachuting food and medicine to all sides in Bosnia — but mainly to Muslims

trapped in Serb sieges — the United States has been looking for ways to increase pressure on the Serbs to comply with U.N. sanctions. It particularly favours blocking arms shipments into and out of Serbia.

Mr. Stephanopoulos said U.S. teams in recent days had productive discussions with Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Croatia, Albania and Macedonia,

and they agreed to join in pressing for better controls" over arms shipments and more stringent implementation of financial sanctions.

But sanctions have not stopped the Serb drive so far. During his presidency, George Bush tried sanctions against Iraq and ultimately resorted to military force.

The conventional wisdom has been that the mountainous ter-

rain in the former Yugoslavia and the complicated ethnic hatreds there would make a U.S. military mission too risky.

Not everyone adheres to that view.

Military expert J.P. Mackley, writing in the Washington Post concluded that "by almost any American standard, the Serbs aren't very good militarily" and were using tactics similar to those

of the U.S. civil war. Furthermore, he wrote, "if the United States did not choose to send in ground troops, U.S. fighter pilots could still clear the air over Bosnia in less time than it took in Iraq and with far less trouble."

Military writer George Wilson wrote that the high-tech Tomahawk missile would be ideal in striking Serbian targets and could do so without risking the lives of bomber pilots.

"The hilly terrain of the former Yugoslavia provides easily recognisable checkpoints for the Tomahawk," he wrote.

But experts note that a formal decision to target Serbia militarily would probably end Russia's promised cooperation in the Bosnian airlift because of its traditional ties to the Serbs and the right-wing challenge facing Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

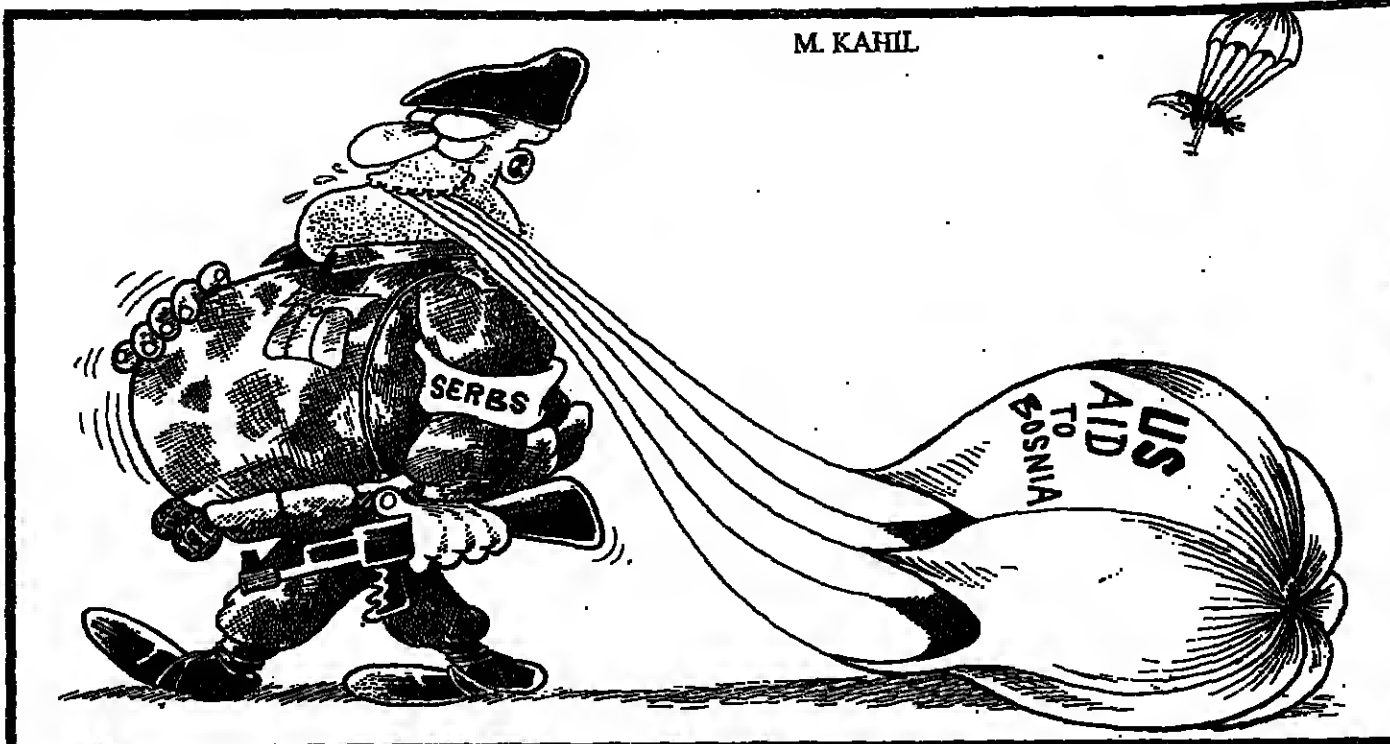
Charles William Maynes, editor of Foreign Policy magazine, writes in the current issue that the best course for the international community is a final effort to reach an agreement by negotiation.

If that fails, the United Nations should lift the arms embargo and allow the Bosnian Muslims and Croats to defend themselves against the Serbs.

"With outside help and even air support, they still would be unlikely to win the war but they might limit the size of a new, greater Serbia enough to carve out a place for the Muslim minority to retain their own state," Mr. Maynes wrote.

## A cool reception

U.S. unwelcoming to Boutros- Ghali plea on troops in Bosnia



M. KAHIL

## Russian democracy

A crisis with frightening potential



Boris Yeltsin

living standards were down 50 per cent.

There has been an alarming increase in crime and corruption.

Separatist tendencies and nationalist conflicts that had been cooled by the Cold War are getting hot again, ranging from

bloody war in the Transcaucasus and Central Asia to confrontation over minority rights in the Baltics.

But despite these overwhelming odds, the conventional wisdom of most of the American media that the Russian democracy is doomed is off the mark. There is still strong support for reform among political leaders and the Russian people. The real political battle today is not between reformers and reactionaries, but between different kinds of reforms.

There are those like Mr. Yeltsin who prefer to act swiftly and decisively, and those like the Civic Union which would rather move more gradually. The fact that all political leaders except for the extreme reactionaries pay at least lip service to a free market economy means there will be no turning back to communism.

The negative news from Russia has completely obscured the positive news. Just as Washington is not America, Moscow is not Russia.

While political infighting is big news in Moscow, privatisation and growth are proceeding irreversibly in other parts of Russia.

Twenty per cent of the GNP is

now produced by private enterprise. More than 30 per cent of Russian workers are in private enterprise. The press is free. Privatising the economy has helped to eliminate shortages.

No one now talks about the possibility of starvation, as was the case when I was in Moscow last summer.

Most important, as experts such as James Billington and Gerald Corrigan have noted, the caricature that Russian workers are not responding to economic incentives is false.

In a meeting in St. Petersburg recently, private entrepreneurs unanimously agreed that, when given the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of a free society, Russian workers are among the best in the world.

They are also among the best educated: Ninety per cent have graduated from high school, a higher percentage than in the United States.

Can Boris Yeltsin survive? Some Western leaders I talked to question it. Some of his opponents in Russia doubt it. Most shocking, the State Department officer who until last month was in charge of aid to Russia publicly predicted he would not last. With friends like that, Mr. Yeltsin needs no enemies.

The former U.S. president, who recently visited Moscow, contributed this comment to The New York Times. It is reprinted here from The International Herald Tribune.

## New world order

### 'How much courage is needed to be a coward?'

By William Pafaff

PARIS — The new world order has arrived. It is well and truly new, consecrating invasion, aggression and ethnic purge as acceptable international conduct (acceptable since in fact accepted by the democracies, ratified in the Vance-Owen plan for Yugoslav settlement).

The principal agency of international action, the United Nations Security Council, pursues peace in Yugoslavia by demanding that the victim of aggression, the non-ethnic Bosnian government, halt its resistance to what is being done to its people.

"How much courage is needed to be a coward?" the undersecretary of the British Foreign Office, Sir Alexander Cadogan, wrote in his diary in September 1938, when Britain and France served their ultimatum on Czechoslovakia's president, Eduard Benes, demanding that he yield to Hitler's demands.

They at least had a rationale. The appeasers had a case to make, which Western leaders do not today have. The French and British governments in 1938 believed the Czech arrogance had invited difficulties with Germany. They believed that Hitler's claims on the German-populated Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia had some justification. They saw Hitler as an aggressive nationalist, but certainly not as a figure of megalomaniac and genocidal ambition.

They believed their own countries were weaker than a rearming Germany. People then were close to World War I. The British

ambassador to Germany, Sir Neville Henderson, sent a memo to the Foreign Office in May 1938: "Surely our right course is to be prepared to submit, provided we secure peace in the West, without too great discomfort to the surge and swell of restless pan-Germanism in Central and Eastern Europe... What other practical course is open to us if we are to avoid the insane fatalistic folly of setting our course for another war?"

The West then believed that Hitler's ambitions wholly in the East. Mr. Henderson's memo went on to say that "a certain German predominance eastward is inevitable, and peace in the West must not be sacrificed to a theoretically laudable but practically mistaken idealism in the East... The German is certainly more civilized than the Slav... One might even go so far as to assert that it is not even just to endeavour to prevent Germany from completing her unity or from being prepared for war against the Slav, provided her preparations are such as to reassure the British Empire, that they are not simultaneously designed against it."

This was a "realistic" position which history has shown to have been mistaken and immoral. But it was not irrational. The appeasers had a case. Do they have a case today? Serbia is not Nazi Germany. It is a minor power with a divided public opinion and a total regular armed force of 135,000, 39,000 of whom are conscripts. Switzerland can mobilise five times that number of soldiers. The Serbian mili-

tias in Bosnia are well-armed and fanatical but undisciplined and unprofessional.

Serbia is not making a diplomatic demand that the international community award it Serbian-occupied parts of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as Hitler was doing with respect to the Sudetenland. It has invaded those countries and seized those territories (and more), brutally expelling or murdering the inhabitants, holding these regions today by means of proxy "autonomous republics." Its demand is that the world accept what it has done. In the Vance-Owen plan, the world does — with a legalistic demur or two.

As in 1938, there is a real risk that the present war will spread, but this is likely to come as a consequence of Serbian victory and subsequent efforts to purge Serbia itself of its Albanian and Hungarian minorities. Indifference to aggression invites new aggressions.

The threat to the West is not that it might be drawn into an ill-prepared war with a great power, but that by tolerating and rewarding aggression, much of southeastern Europe will be drawn into disorder and war, with demoralising and divisive effect upon the democracies — and a potentially most dangerous influence inside the ex-Soviet Union.

The sole case for appeasement today, so far as I understand the situation, is that Western leaders fear the political consequences in their own countries of military involvement in Yugoslavia. The West did nothing effective a year and a half ago, however, when

economic and political measures might have halted the crisis, and now West European and other U.N. forces have become deeply and dangerously involved on the ground in Yugoslavia precisely because of their governments' evasion of their international responsibilities.

There has until now been some question as to the attitude that would be taken by the Clinton administration. The past few days have removed that doubt, confirming that the policy of Mr. Clinton will also be that of ostentatious measures of humanitarian assistance — impartially distributed between Serb aggressors and besieged Bosnians — with support for the Vance-Owen plan.

The aid drops made by the U.S. Air Force these last few days have cruelly demonstrated the limit to what the United States is prepared to do: night aid drops from 10,000 feet (3,000 meters) in mountainous country — with the particularly nice touch of including pork meals for starving Muslims.

This is fundamentally faithful to the established Western policy in dealing with this crisis, which is to appease, simultaneously, Western public opinion and aggression itself. It is an implausible programme, but one that thus far has been a success. The final step, already announced, will be the injection of U.S. troops to enforce the Vance-Owen plan, once that is signed. And who will have any reason to resist? Only the victims.

International Herald Tribune.

## LETTERS

### Effort not in vain

To the Editor:

AS PART of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee's (ADC), Amman Regional office's efforts to get the U.S. government to pressure Israel to abide by U.N. Resolution 799 and Geneva Conventions, several thousand postcards were sent to American officials by Arabs, Arab-Americans and American citizens.

It was our hope that these postcards would help mobilise American officials and public to finally stand up and speak out against the illegal acts of Israel.

Many sceptics feel that our committee's activities are useless. I feel that it is important that such individuals learn that our activities are not in vain and that we must keep trying by any means possible to bring a just solution to the Arab-Israeli problem.

I would like to share with these sceptics a letter I received from a brave American citizen who knows that when there is a will there is a way, and who thinks that every human being who truly believes in a principle must bare the burden of fighting for the preservation of that principle. The letter reads as follows:

"What a pleasant surprise to get a letter from you and to find that you are doing well and very active in the struggle for peace and justice in 'your' Middle East! I am ahead of you... I have been knocking myself out speaking and writing about the horrible conditions in the Arab World, you in this fight. I have been in contact with Congress people about this and I will have to say that it is an up hill battle. The powerful Israeli lobby has most congresspersons completely gone into their states and caused defeat for some. However, we must continue to 'educate' them about Israeli crimes... which we will do. It is hard to beat the millions of dollars that the lobby has given to congresspersons and I certainly want that stopped!"

"You know that I, personally, am totally pro-Arab and I guarantee my continued fight. I will, indeed send those very poignant cards to one and all but I will include a personal letter with each (on my stationery as Association of National Security Alumni and President of the recipients actually read them!" (Colonel, Phil Roettinger)

Dr. Aida Dabbas  
Amman.



## Arab coordination talks on March 28

(Continued from page 1)

Syria, which had been lukewarm to the idea of Damascus hosting an Arab meeting on the expulsions, appeared to shift its stand when it said in late January that it would convene an Arab coordination meeting on how to relaunch the peace process.

The announcement, which followed a meeting in Geneva between Mr. Sharaa and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, said the objective of the Arab talks was to enable all Arab parties to resume the peace talks "in a comfortable and agreeable atmosphere."

Mr. Kaddoumi arrived here from Damascus Friday after talks with Mr. Sharaa on the peace process and Syrian-Palestinian political relations.

Dr. Abu Jaber said he was scheduled to meet with the PLO official Saturday. Discussions with centre on the peace process and other issues that are directly related to Jordanian-Palestinian coordination.

In public comments, PLO officials are insisting on the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which calls on Israel to allow the return of the expelled. But they are also involved in behind-the-scenes efforts to get Israel to agree to an American-brokered six-point proposal which envisages a phased return of the exiles (see separate story).

Jordan has said that while it remains fully committed to the peace process, it would be difficult for it to attend the peace talks if the Palestinians stayed away.

In a recent interview with American television, His Majesty King Hussein noted that it was under a Jordanian umbrella that the Palestinians were participating in the peace talks and as such

there was little sense in "half a delegation."

The Jordanian approach to the expellee crisis is from the vantage point that Israeli expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied territories is part of the broader conflict.

"The entire Palestinian nation is in exile," said a senior official. "We cannot lose sight of the reality that the peace process aims at resolving the root conflict."

In comments carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Kaddoumi said Jordan's position vis-a-vis the peace process reflected the Kingdom's "keen interest in bringing the peace efforts to a successful end in a way that ensures that the Palestinians will regain their legitimate political rights."

"We fully agree with His Majesty's position that we (Jordanians and Palestinians) are a joint delegation and we have a common cause," he said. "Any harm to this cause through Israeli practices in the occupied territories is directed against the peace process and placing obstacles in its path."

The Jordanian stand expressed by King Hussein is designed to urge the U.S. and Russia to exert all efforts to prevent Israel from its repressive measures in the occupied territories and the work towards the immediate return of all expellees in accordance with Resolution 799," he said.

On prospects for the resumption of peace talks on April 20, Mr. Kaddoumi said: "When the Palestinian delegation met with Mr. Christopher in Jerusalem (during his recent Middle East visit), a six-point memo was presented to him in the name of the Palestinian people. It included the Palestinian conditions for the resumption of the peace talks and on which any just peace settlement should be based."

## PLO, Hamas discuss future of Gaza

(Continued from page 1)

be more than 40 per cent; they say we would receive the majority of the votes, would like to have elections and see what our true strength on the street is."

Mr. Nazzari had been meeting with Amman-based PLO official Abbas Zaki and Abdul Rahim Mallouh, head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) office to discuss "concerted actions vis-a-vis this issue of withdrawal."

Mr. Zaki and Mr. Mallouh were out of the country Friday and were unavailable for comments.

But PLO officials in Tunis voiced amazement at the Hamas statements, saying that it was "much too early to speak of proposals which have not officially been made."

"The PLO has not received any Israeli, Arab or American offer which would indicate that the Israelis were willing to withdraw from Palestinian lands in Gaza or elsewhere," said a senior advisor to Yasser Arafat, Mamdouh Nofal.

"This issue (of withdrawal from Gaza) may be brought up at the next round of talks and maybe the Israelis will make a previously unknown proposal," he said.

"We will consider any Israeli withdrawal a sign that the liberation of our land has begun and we will bear the responsibility of governing any land that has been liberated," Mr. Nofal said.

The United Nations and the Arab countries will also have "their responsibilities to live up to in case of an Israeli withdrawal," he added.

PLO officials were careful not to say that no proposal had been made. They only stressed that no "official" proposal had been made to them.

"There is absolutely no official proposal of the sort," said another PLO official in Tunis, speaking to the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity.

The official confirmed that "Gaza will probably be the easiest part of Palestine to liberate" and that the PLO would consider moving its people and temporary headquarters to the parts of Palestine that were liberated at the initial stages of the negotiations.

Palestinian analysts in Amman feared that an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza would ignite a power struggle between the PLO and Hamas in the poor and overpopulated strip and that the declaration of a Palestinian state in Gaza would occur.

"If there is a withdrawal from Gaza outside the framework of an overall Palestinian-Israeli

agreement then we will be cantoning Palestinian lands similar to the way the proposal for Bosnian Muslim lands is a form of cantonisation," said a veteran Palestinian analyst in Jordan.

The withdrawal from Gaza, which is suspected will occur, can leave a power vacuum if the PLO does not move in lock, stock and barrel in an organised and efficient manner," said the analyst.

Declaring a Palestinian state, which PLO officials insist will not occur in Gaza but "in Jerusalem," would effectively negate the possibility of declaring a state in the West Bank or East Jerusalem, Palestinian analysts say.

Whether by announcing the discussion of the talks Hamas wants to emphasise its growing role in Palestinian politics or divert attention from other issues is not clear, PLO officials say.

"Instead of concentrating on the expellees or studying the six-point plan of the Americans, they are discussing proposals which are not yet on the table," Mr. Nofal said.

But Hamas appears to be moving forward with its public relations campaign both in Europe and in the Arab World.

After announcing that they had met Chinese and Spanish diplomats last week, Hamas issued an official statement Friday thanking a senior Saudi Arabian clergyman for his support of Palestinian causes.

Addressing the statement to Abdul Aziz Ben Baz, a senior Saudi cleric who has government backing, Hamas thanked the sheikh for his statements of support.

While the supposed statement by Sheikh Beo Baz was not available to the Jordan Times, the Hamas statement claimed that he had urged all "Muslims to support Palestinians by financing them and offering both arms and men to their disposal."

The cleric had apparently called on all Arab governments to take a united stand on the issue of expellees and had pledged his support.

"We will extend our support and our money to the Palestinians," the Hamas statement quoted Sheikh Ben Baz as saying.

No mention was apparently made in the statement about the PLO. The cleric is thought to have been giving "mixed" signals to the Palestinians, Palestinian analysts say.

Saudi Arabia and some Gulf countries had been giving special attention and dues to Hamas even before the Gulf war now its way to test the PLO," said an analyst. PLO relations with most Gulf countries plummeted after Palestinians openly opposed the U.S.-led alliance against Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

## FBI traces funds for New York blast

(Continued from page 1)

indictment and possible removal to New York.

A top investigator to the bombing has said he believes the suspects had accomplices who have disappeared and may have fled to the Middle East.

Finishing the source of the money would help investigators determine a motive in the Feb. 26 bombing that killed at least five people and injured more than 1,000. The bomb went off in a garage underneath the twin 110-storey towers.

While the federal investigator would not disclose how much money had been transferred into the account, he said there were probably several deposits of under \$10,000. Deposits of that size would avoid federal laws requiring the reporting of cash

transactions of \$10,000 or more. Mr. Salameh, 25, is described as an illegal alien from Jordan who was arrested March 4.

Both are charged with aiding in the bombing. Mr. Salameh is alleged to have rented the van that held the bomb. Mr. Ayyad's alleged role has not been disclosed.

Mr. Ayyad and Mr. Salameh share an account at a Jersey City branch of National Westminster Bank.

Other links between the two men include attending services at the same mosque in Jersey City. And both Mr. Salameh and Mr. Ayyad have been close to Al Sayid Nosair, who was acquitted of murder in the 1990 assassination of Rabbi Meir Kahane but is in Attica state prison on related charges.

## Relatives say Ayyad not extremist

(Continued from page 1)

Nidal and his siblings grew up in Kuwait under the care of their mother Fatima, their maternal grandfather, who was a preacher in a mosque in Kuwait, and their maternal uncle, Khalil Abdul Aziz Ayyad.

He passed Tawjihi from the Hawti High School in Kuwait City in 1985 with an average of 75 per cent marks.

Nidal, who held a Jordanian passport, left Kuwait in 1985 for the United States on immigration papers arranged by his father and joined Rutgers University in New York. He graduated in 1991 in chemical engineering. He acquired American citizenship in the same year.

His two sisters are married to Americans of Arab origin and live in Washington, D.C. His mother lives with her sons in Maplewood, New Jersey.

His grandfather and uncle say they used to support the youth throughout his education since his father's assistance was negligible. Nidal also worked in the cafeteria of Rutgers University to support himself, they said.

Sheikh Ayyad visited his grandson in 1990, shortly after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait which forced the entire Ayyad family, along with the bulk of the Palestinian community, to leave the emirate.

Khalil Ayyad, who now works for an insurance company in Amman said the parents of Mr. Salameh visited his home last year to meet Nidal's mother who was in Jordan at that time to prepare for her son's marriage.

The Salamehs "knew that Nidal and Mohammad were friends in the U.S., and wanted to inquire about their son from his friend's mother," said his wife, Umm Abed.

Umm Abed or anyone else in the Ayyad family in Jordan did not know anything more about the relationship between Nidal Ayyad and Mohammad Salameh except that they were good friends.

Sheikh Ayyad, who lives in Jabal Akbar, said that during his visit to the U.S. in 1990, "I heard Nidal talking a lot about his friend Mohammad, but I did not see the boy."

After his graduation from Rutgers, Nidal took up employment with Allied Signals Inc., a New

Jersey firm. One of his brothers, Rezaq, is also working; the other two, Abdul Hamid and Khalil, are still in school.

Nidal visited Jordan for the first time in April 1992 to get engaged to a girl from the Gabounah family, from the Majdal Askalan village in the occupied Gaza Strip, who was chosen by his mother.

He flew back to the U.S. after the engagement and returned on Dec. 11 with American immigration papers for his 18-year-old bride.

His mother Fatima attended the wedding along with his brothers. His father did not attend.

The couple were married on Dec. 19 and left for the U.S. on Dec. 28. According to Umm Abed, who said she talked to Nidal's mother upon bearing the news of Nidal's arrest on Wednesday, the wife is pregnant.

Ayyad family members declined to give any details of the in-laws of Nidal except that they lived somewhere in Amman (Salt) and did not want to talk to the press.

Sheikh Ayyad said his grandson was religious and used to read religious books in his spare time. "He used to pray regularly and fast during Ramadan like any other devout Muslim," Sheikh Ayyad said. "But he is not a fundamentalist or extremist," he added. "I am sure that he was not linked with any political or religious group in Kuwait or elsewhere."

Khalil Ayyad said Nidal told him when he was here for his marriage that "he was committed to the American political system and voted for President Bill Clinton in the last elections with hopes that things would get better for America."

Umm Abed described Nidal as "a straight-forward boy."

"I hope my children would grow up to be like him," Umm Abed said, stroking the hair of her 11-year-old son Abdul Aziz sitting in her living room overlooking the sprawling Wihdat refugee camp.

She said she "practically brought up" Nidal and his siblings while in Kuwait.

"He was never involved in any violence even when he was a small boy when it is natural for children to get into fights with each other."

## Exiles reject reported PLO plan

(Continued from page 1)

bathe, wash clothes and dry mattresses soaked during several days of heavy rain and hail.

They received food smuggled on mules by villagers.

The expellees have a new prob-

lem — "bitter" wolves. "Ziad Abulhail, 27, was walking near a river just above the camp Thursday night when he saw five beasts scurrying towards him. Trembling, he threw himself into the water and drifted with the flow.

## Yeltsin to press for referendum

(Continued from page 1)

measures from the resolution, "I shall really be forced to think about additional measures to preserve the balance of powers in the country."

Although he did not spell to the deputies what measures he would take, aides said he would press for the national plebiscite on April 25.

"It's much better to go to polling places than to take to the streets," Mr. Shakhrai told reporters.

In addition, it is presumed elections would be held early for both the president and parliament.

Mr. Khasbulatov, Mr. Yeltsin's main rival for power, is seeking simultaneous elections. Currently, presidential elections are scheduled for 1996 and parliamentary elections for 1995.

U.S. officials said in Washington Thursday that Mr. Yeltsin was weighing the dissolution of congress and emergency rule, but first Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeiko told reporters not to expect such a "sensation."

Nevertheless, Yeltsin told the deputies he had reached his limit.

"I have done everything possible to reach an accord, proposed a number of versions for compromise, listened to opinions, though in many cases they took foul and sometimes insulting forms," Mr. Yeltsin said as the lawmakers listened uneasily in the Grand Kremlin Palace.

"There is only an extremely small selection of means left to maintain the stability of the situation," he said.

But the deputies remained unmoved by his speech.

## Palestinians see American pressure

(Continued from page 1)

Jerusalem Wednesday refused to accept the invitation, and returned it to the consular's desk.

But Palestinian officials, unable to predict what developments are expected to take place before April 20 that might affect their decision on whether to participate in the bilateral, insisted that the Palestinian leadership was firm against attending the talks under the current conditions without achieving any of their demands.

In six points presented to Mr. Christopher during his recent Middle East tour, Palestinian leaders demanded a U.S. declaration that Israeli expulsions are illegal and a new American letter of assurances confirming the Madrid terms of reference of the peace negotiations; i.e. that the basis of the talks in both phases (the interim and final) are resolutions 242 and 338 — an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem.

While Palestinians said that these points were initially (and verbally) approved by Mr. Christopher in Jerusalem, the Americans retracted their position after Israel's rejection of the demands.

The rest of the points include an Israeli commitment to the following:

— A commitment to end further expulsions of Palestinians.

— An acceleration of implementing Resolution 799, calling on Israel's immediate and unconditional return of the evictees, and agree to a scheduled repatriation of the 400 stranded Palestinian men;

— To agree to return a "sizeable" number of Palestinians expelled from the occupied territories since 1967;

— To stop its violations of human rights against the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Salah Raafat, an Amman-based PLO official, told the Jordan Times that contacts with the U.S. were ongoing and that a Palestinian delegation was expected to visit Washington to discuss the pending issues with State Department officials, but that no date had been set.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, PLO officials said that the head of the organisation's political department, Farouk Kaddoumi, failed to convince Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa to hold a foreign ministers meeting of Arab parties involved in the peace talks during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Seen by Palestinians as a delaying tactic, Syria set the coordination meeting after Ramadan and the feast holidays. But instead of gathering Arab support for their position at that meeting, the PLO might find itself cornered to accept participation

Mr. Raafat also said that the PLO had rejected an American draft letter of assurances on the terms of reference of the negotiations because the U.S. had not included Jerusalem as part of 242. The letter was in response of a Palestinian demand for American reassurances of the terms of reference of the talks.

The official, a senior member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) — Yasser Abed Rabbo's wing — insisted that the PLO would not yield to pressure to send its delegation to the talks if their minimal demands were not met.

"We simply will not go even if the rest of the Arab parties did," Mr. Raafat stressed. "Everyone knows that there cannot be a solution to the Middle East conflict unless substantive issues are resolved on the Palestinian track."

But Mr. Christopher's statement that he was sure of Palestinian participation in the ninth round of talks indicated that either Palestinian signals were delivered to Washington that the PLO was ready to consider sending its peace delegation, or that the pressure on the Palestinians would be so great they would have to participate, analysts said.

Palestinians have already started to come under pressure since Wednesday's invitations were issued. While all the Arab parties said they would make their position to the April talks known after a coordination meeting in Damascus at the end of this month, Syria and Lebanon have already indicated their willingness to resume the talks with Israel.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, PLO officials said that the head of the organisation's political department, Farouk Kaddoumi, failed to convince Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa to hold a foreign ministers meeting of Arab parties involved in the peace talks during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Seen by Palestinians as a delaying tactic, Syria set the coordination meeting after Ramadan and the feast holidays. But instead of gathering Arab support for their position at that meeting, the PLO might find itself cornered to accept participation

## Rabin begins talks in Washington

(Continued from page 1)

Heights in phases provided Israel recognised Syria's sovereignty over the strategic territory.

Nearly 1,000 protesting settlers from the occupied territories blocked the roads outside Mr. Rabin's Tel Aviv home Thursday night, delaying his wife's departure for the airport. The plane was delaying an hour as a result.

Mr. Rabin said in an interview published Friday that it will be difficult to persist in the peace talks if progress is not made this year.

Mr. Rabin also warned against U.S. involvement in Arab-Israeli peace talks going beyond mediation until the two sides have moved more closely together.

In the interview with the Hebrew daily Davar, Mr. Rabin said he believed 1993 would be "the year of crossroads" in which the direction of the U.S.-backed peace talks would be decided.

But he added the negotiations could falter unless they start to move forward.

"To tread for another year without progress, some sort of breakthrough ... it will be very

difficult to stick with this with the belief that the process will bring results," Mr. Rabin said.

He also noted he had been wrong in predicting, before his election last July, that an agreement with the Palestinians could be reached in six to nine months. He noted no breakthrough has been achieved since the talks began in October 1991.

Responding to American suggestions that the United States should become a "full partner" in the negotiations, Mr. Rabin said it was too early for such a move.

"In my view, no Arab-Israeli agreement can be reached without American involvement," Mr. Rabin said, noting the U.S.-engineered Camp David accords led to the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

But he said active American involvement came only after the two sides narrowed their differences through direct talks.

"It will be very bad if the Americans won't learn the lesson that first the two sides need to move closer to one another and only then is there room for greater American involvement," Mr. Rabin added.

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## Around 200 die in Bombay blasts

BOMBAY (AP) — A series of car bombs exploded across Bombay Friday, killing almost 200 people and injuring 800. Two of the blasts set fire to skyscrapers housing India's largest stock exchange and the headquarters of its international airline.

Scattered Hindu-Muslim violence erupted in several areas of the city after the explosions. Witnesses saw about 25 Hindus set two cars afire in a Muslim neighbourhood. In another area, Muslims torched a building and threw stones indiscriminately.

Chief Minister Sharad Pawar, the state's top official who reported the casualty figures, told reporters that the bombing wave appeared to be a deliberate effort to "spread panic." But he did not speculate who might be responsible.

At least 12 bombs went off within 75 minutes across various districts of India's financial capital, including seven in the commercial district, S.B. Chavan, the federal home minister said. Two tourist hotels were also damaged.

"There is panic in the whole of Bombay," said Harpreet Kaur, a stock broker in a building in the middle of the stock exchange.

"Nobody has had time to think about who is responsible. People have been busy trying to find out what happened and find the victims," she said in a telephone interview.

Mr. Pawar warned Bombay's 12 million citizens to be on alert for more bombs, to look their cars and check the basements of tall buildings.

"There has to be perfect planning" for this kind of action, Mr. Pawar said. He called it an attempt to disrupt the stability that was returning to Bombay after the January riots.

About 600 people were killed in the Bombay riots, which were an extension of the nationwide violence in December that began after Hindu extremists tore down a Muslim shrine on disputed holy ground in Ayodhya. In the nationwide riots 1,940 were killed.

In New Delhi, Deputy Home Minister Rajesh Pilot told lawmakers that all the explosions were from car bombs. He said the government issued a nationwide alert.

At least 20 burned and mutilated bodies were removed from the 23 storey Air India Airline building, most of them from the Bank of Oman on the street level which was gutted.

The 28 storey stockexchange building caught fire from the explosion at 1:30 p.m. (0000 GMT). Stock brokers and investors bolted from the building in panic. Some people were trampled to death in a stampede of people fleeing to the streets, Press Trust of India said. The blast came in the middle of trading when the second-floor exchange was most crowded.

About 3,000 stock brokers, traders and employees work on the stock exchange floor, and thousands more on the other floors.

United News of India, which had a reporter on the fourth floor, said the blast occurred in a basement parking garage, blew up more than 30 cars, and shattered windows up to the third floor.

Some people were stranded on upper floors when security officials closed smoky staircases. Press Trust of India reported. Other people broke windows on lower floors and tried to jump out.

Ms. Kaur said many of the injured were street vendors and unregistered stock traders who conduct their business outside the building. "There were so many dead bodies outside in the street," she said. Smoke billowed from the lower floors, as people poured out of the entrance.

Ms. Kaur said she heard another explosion about 90 minutes after the stock exchange one. She was in her car about an hour away from the downtown area when she heard the second blast.

The explosion outside the headquarters of Air India flung bodies up to 20 feet away, Press Trust reported. Scores of people were trapped in its underground parking lot.

One bomb rattled the Victoria Terminus, the 19th century railway station where hundreds of thousands of commuters and travellers pass through daily.

Another went off at Shivaji Park near the headquarters of the radical Hindu group Shiv Sena, which was blamed for inciting some of the worst anti-Muslim violence in January.

A third went off at the Centaur Hotel near the city's airport, and a fourth at Seavark Hotel in Bandra, 22 kilometres from the city centre.

In a separate development, India replaced the hardline governor of Jammu and Kashmir state Thursday to ease the way toward talks on ending a bloody three-year Muslim insurrection.

Under the governorship of Girish Chander Saxena, who served in the post since May 1990, India deployed massive forces in the Kashmir Valley and its capital, Srinagar, to crush the insurrection. Nearly 5,000 people have died in the fighting since it broke out in December 1989.

Mr. Saxena submitted his resignation to Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao Wednesday.

Gen. K.V. Krishna Rao, the newly appointed governor, will be returning to the office he held four years ago.

Kashmir has been governed by a federally appointed governor since January 1990, when the elected government headed by Farooq Abdullah resigned.

Mr. Abdullah, considered close to Krishna Rao, said in an interview he expected talks to begin with militant organisations on granting Kashmir a greater degree of autonomy than anywhere else in India.

Muslim militants are fighting to split Jammu and Kashmir state from India either to merge it with Pakistan or to become an independent country.

Kashmir is the only Muslim majority state in India. Nationwide, India is 82 per cent Hindu and 12 per cent Muslim.

The switch at the top of the state administration may not satisfy secessionist Muslims.

"We are not bothered who is governor. We are struggling for freedom and only freedom from India is our goal," said John Mohammad, a businessman from Srinagar.

Ten children were killed in the Wednesday-night raid on this floating village by as many as 40 gunmen armed with AK-47 rifles, police told Reuters.

"There were babies with their hands shot off... (the attackers) got into one houseboat and shot the kids in the head. It's that savage," a U.N. investigator said.

"They arrived by boat and carried out the attack with military precision."

A U.N. spokesman said there were 60 government soldiers and policemen in the village at the time of the attack but they apparently offered no resistance and fled.

"They are reported to have escaped and one of them suffered any casualties," spokesman Eric Falt told reporters.

A floating police station is moored 500 yards from the site of the massacre.

Many of the bodies recovered had been shot in the head and shoulders, indicating they had

been killed while trying to swim for safety, a U.N. source said.

Many of the 1,200 inhabitants of the floating village had jumped overboard when the hour-long attack began shortly after 8:30 p.m. Wednesday.

On Friday 15 coffins were littered about the village of lashed rafts and houseboats, segregated from the residences of ethnic Cambodians since a wave of violence against Vietnamese began last year.

There were bullet holes throughout the floating structures, especially a video parlour where nearly half of the dead had been watching a film when caught by surprise.

It was the worst atrocity in Cambodia since the country's four rival factions signed a peace accord in October 1991. U.N. sources said Khmer Rouge guerrillas from Regiment 91 of Division 980 are suspected of responsibility.

On one houseboat an entire family of nine, including three young children, was murdered.

"A little girl was thrown overboard and drowned," a spokesman for the U.N. peacekeepers said.

One attacker was killed, allegedly a woman resident. His body was stripped and staked to the bottom of the lake, one of the investigators said.

Three ethnic Cambodians were among the 29 injured who were treated at a U.N.'s field hospital in Siem Reap.

U.N. police and human rights officials were heading for the massacre site on the lake of Tonle Sap, 10 kilometres south of Siem Reap, to join investigators already there.

The head of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, branded the attack "a heinous crime."

A 22,000-strong peacekeeping force has been in Cambodia for a year but political violence has risen to that time as the Khmer Rouge moves further from the peace plan.

The guerrillas have a vendetta against the Vietnamese, who ousted them from power when they invaded the country in late 1978.

The Khmer Rouge often broadcast anti-Vietnamese propaganda on their radio station and have been blamed by the United Nations for previous attacks on ethnic Vietnamese communities.

Diplomats say the Khmer Rouge hope to undermine the Hanoi-installed government by exploiting anti-Vietnamese sentiment.

Rivalry between Cambodia and Vietnam stretches back centuries and the Vietnamese issue is fertile ground for rabble-rousing by all opposition political factions.

Diplomats believe Pol Pot, who has formally retired, still directs the operations of the Khmer Rouge.

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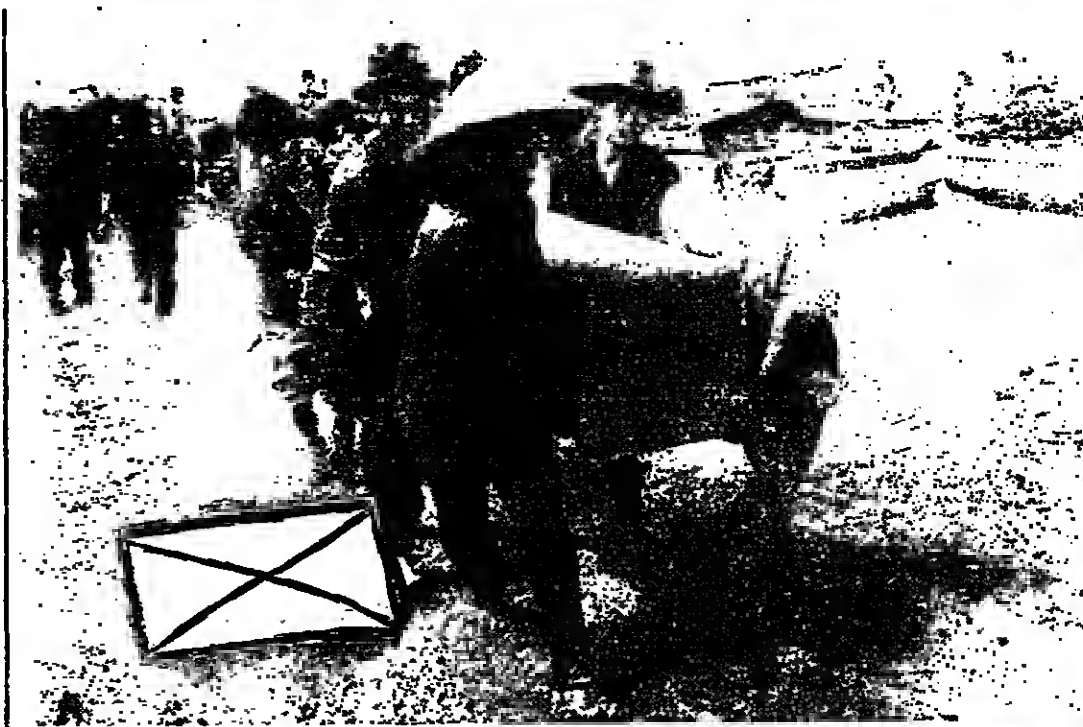
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Ethnic Vietnamese fishermen offload coffins carrying the remains of the 34 ethnic Vietnamese massacred by the Khmer Rouge (AFP photo)

## Khmer Rouge massacre 34 ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodian village

CHONG KNEAS, Cambodia (R) — Gunmen who massacred 34 ethnic Vietnamese villagers in northwest Cambodia, including children shot in the head or drowned, were Khmer Rouge guerrillas, local people said Friday.

"Pol Pot, Pol Pot," villagers shouted to journalists, naming the infamous leader of the Maoist group that put Cambodia through a reign of terror in the 1970s that killed a million people.

Ten children were killed in the Wednesday-night raid on this floating village by as many as 40 gunmen armed with AK-47 rifles, police told Reuters.

"There were babies with their hands shot off... (the attackers) got into one houseboat and shot the kids in the head. It's that savage," a U.N. investigator said.

"They arrived by boat and carried out the attack with military precision."

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## Bosnians holding British troops spell out terms

SARAJEVO (R) — Five British soldiers were effectively being held hostage in a Bosnian village on Friday by Muslims demanding a ceasefire, the stationing of U.N. monitors in the region and humanitarian aid.

A U.N. convoy with a British escort of two armoured cars had gone to the besieged village of Konjevic Polje Thursday to try to evacuate women and children, but was surrounded by angry Muslims demanding they take out all the wounded, mainly men.

A British military spokesman said the villagers had set fire to his bales of hay in order to block the escape of the two armoured escort vehicles.

Local Serb forces in Bosnia had told the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which organised the convoy, they could not evacuate wounded men of fighting age, 18 to 60.

U.N. officials in Sarajevo said Friday the villagers had raised their conditions for the release of the five British soldiers by demanding a ceasefire, monitors and aid.

A spokesman at British headquarters at Vitez, central Bosnia, in told Reuters Friday morning that the crews of the two armoured cars had spent the night in Konjevic Polje.

"They do not feel threatened," Major Martin Waters said from Vitez. "They will continue negotiations to try to evacuate people from the village."

Miss Anstee suggested five options for dealing with the Angolan crisis:

Expanding the size and powers of the current U.N. force of some 700 personnel to make it into a peace enforcement mission to monitor a ceasefire, the option she advocated.

U.N. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Miss Anstee felt a force of at least 8,000, and preferably up to 15,000, would be needed.

She felt that if the Angolan government and UNITA rebel leader Jonas Savimbi believed such a mission were on its way, they would agree to a ceasefire and enter into productive peace talks.

The second option was to simply seek a truce and ceasefire in Angola.

A third proposal would turn the current U.N. Angolan mission into a strictly humanitarian effort to deliver aid to the population. But if the war continued, that effort would not be very effective.

Another approach would be to maintain the status quo, with U.N. operations in Angola mostly suspended. Dr. Ghali has said the U.N. personnel should be withdrawn if there is no ceasefire by the end of April, when the mission is due to be renewed.

The final option was to encourage mediation efforts between the government and UNITA at a lower level than attempted up to now.

In addition, the United States — which for years was one of the chief sponsors of the UNITA rebels that have captured most of Angola — was not enthused about slogging into a major peacekeeping campaign in Angola, they said.

But the United States and the Security Council are on the horns of a dilemma, an African diplomat pointed out. If they favour expanded peacekeeping efforts in Angola, why not do the same for Somalia, where the credibility of a J.N. mediated peace settlement is on the line?

At the private council briefing,

## WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

**China's vice-president dies**  
PEKING (R) — China's Vice-President Wang Zhen is dead, the official Xinhua News Agency said Friday. Mr. Wang, who was 85, died in the southern city of Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province. Xinhua described him as "a great proletarian revolutionary, statesman and soldier, a staunch Marxist, and an outstanding leader of the party and the state."

**CIS premiers meet in Moscow**  
MOSCOW (R) — Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) heads of government and other senior officials met in Moscow Friday to discuss economic and military cooperation. The meeting, attended by five prime ministers and four deputy prime ministers, was due to discuss a joint anti-monopoly policy and the creation of a single patent service to protect the rights of inventors. The agenda also includes military cooperation within the 10-member Commonwealth. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Shokin said at the opening of the talks that a Ukrainian delegation headed by Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma had failed to arrive because bad weather prevented flights landing in Moscow. He said Russia's Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin was absent due to this week's meeting of the Congress of People's Deputies.

**Reno confirmed as U.S. attorney general**  
WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed Janet Reno Thursday as the nation's first woman attorney general, completing President Bill Clinton's cabinet. Mr. Clinton congratulated Ms. Reno at the White House after the 98-0 vote and told reporters, "I'm elated by that." Ms. Reno, a Florida state prosecutor for 15 years, said she was pleased to be approved, adding, "I hope to do the women of America proud." It was not certain when she would be sworn in as the 78th attorney general. Senators from both parties praised Ms. Reno before the vote as an outstanding choice to head the Justice Department. "Her tough approach to fighting crime has won her national acclaim from the law enforcement community. Her integrity is beyond question," said Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Joseph Biden, a Democrat. "This is an historic appointment. Her background as a prosecutor will serve her well," added Senator Orrin Hatch, the senior Republican on the committee.

**Armenian president arrives in France**  
PARIS (R) — Armenian President Levon Ter Petrossian arrived on an official visit warmly welcomed by the Socialist government and the centre-right opposition seeking the votes of France's Armenian community. Greeted at Orly Airport south of Paris by Socialist Industry Minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn, he will meet President Francois Mitterrand Friday. He is due to inaugurate a new ambassador's residence Saturday accompanied by a bevy of conservative politicians. The French government has taken a leading role in sending humanitarian aid to Armenia in an effort to break an Azeri blockade of supplies to the former Soviet republic. A 15-wagon train carrying 250 tonnes of French relief supplies to Armenia is on its way across Turkey after leaving Paris on Feb. 24. Turkey backs ethnically linked Azerbaijan in its five-year-old conflict over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, but has agreed to allow the aid to cross into Armenia through its territory.

**Australia Labour battles sense of defeat**  
SYDNEY (R) — Labour Prime Minister Paul Keating, battling a growing sense of defeat on the eve of national elections, Friday beseeched voters to vote against the radical policies of his conservative opponents. Branding opposition leader John Hewson the most radical right-winger ever to seek the country's leadership, a drawn and at times sullen Keating said the Liberal-National Coalition would destroy a decade of Labour reform. "It's not change for the better Dr. Hewson offers, it's change for the worse," Mr. Keating told reporters in his last news conference before Saturday's vote. "The Australia of today — competitive, export-oriented, more educated, high on product innovation, research and development, locked into Asia — is Labour's Australia. Mr. Keating said Australia's sputtering economy had turned the corner and was headed for the strong growth, while Mr. Hewson warned that the economy — which has grown a weak 2.4 per cent in the year to September — may be headed for another recession.

**Gunmen free 9 hostages in Costa Rica**  
SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP) — Gunmen who took over the Nicaraguan embassy released two men and seven women Thursday who had been held captive since the embassy was stormed four days ago. Sixteen other hostages, including Nicaraguan Ambassador Alfonso Robelo, are still believed to remain in the embassy. Their captors are demanding \$6 million and major changes in the Nicaraguan government. Two Costa Rican men were released Thursday morning, and the women were freed in the afternoon. The release of the women came after the gunmen had rejected a government proposal for face-to-face talks at the door of the embassy if the women hostages were freed. It was not known if other women hostages were still being held.

## N. Korea reneges on nuclear pact

SEOUL (R) — Communist North Korea, suspected of building an atomic arsenal said Friday it was pulling out of a world accord on nuclear arms limitation despite the threat of U.N. sanctions against its crippled economy.

Pyeongongyang said it would scrap its membership of the 1970 nuclear arms non-proliferation treaty (NPT), which limits the spread of military nuclear technology, rather than allow international inspectors into its sites.

The withdrawal from the NPT is a well-judged self-defensive measure against the nuclear war manoeuvres of the United States," North Korea said in a statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

South Korea, its relations with the North already at a frosty low, said Pyongongyang's withdrawal was an unexpected blow to detente moves and would further divorce the isolated state from the world community.

It is a bombshell, a slap to the face for the world's efforts to discover the truth about the North's nuclear programme," a senior government official said. Japanese leaders urged the north to reconsider.

"It is really dismaying," said Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa. Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe said it was a challenge to the international system of controlling nuclear proliferation.

Radio Japan said its Korean broadcasts were jammed Friday by Pyongongyang for the first time, along with those of the South Korean station KBS.

"They don't want their people to know they have left the treaty," said a Radio Japan official.

South Korea said the North was highly likely to face United Nations Security Council economic sanctions, a penalty the impoverished state can ill afford following the collapse of communism and the loss of its principal backers.

China remains Pyongongyang's major ally but, mindful of the North's increasing isolation and its own bid to foster better international relations, Peking has pressed the North to settle peacefully its nuclear inspection dispute.

China's use of a veto if the Security Council were to call a vote on North Korean sanctions was therefore by no means a certainty, analysts said.

The U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), last month gave Pyongongyang until March 25 to admit its inspectors to two suspected nuclear weapons plants or face unspecified further action. It is the first time the IAEA has ever demanded a "special challenge inspection" of a member nation's facilities.

North Korea, which denies any intention of developing nuclear weapons, says the two sites are non-nuclear military installations and are outside the ambit of IAEA inspectors.

Pyongongyang's Friday statement, monitored in Tokyo, said the IAEA was being manipulated by the United States, which withdrew its nuclear arms from the peninsula last year.

North Korea's belligerent stance against most of the world, and in particular against South Korea and the United States, has intensified in recent days.

On Tuesday Pyongongyang went on to what military chief Kim Jong-il called a "semi-war" footing to coincide with the start of U.S.-South Korean military exercises south of the demilitarised zone, the cold war frontier which bisects the Korean peninsula.

While Seoul and Washington say the annual Team Spirit manoeuvres are purely defensive, Pyongongyang calls them a pretext for a nuclear attack on the North.

IAEA sources said Friday North Korea's withdrawal from the pact is a grave step and the international community will have to consider the implications.

It was unprecedented for any signatory of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty to scrap its membership, sources at the IAEA said.

"It is a grave step for North Korea to take... the international community will have to look at the implications of what has been announced," an IAEA source told Reuters.

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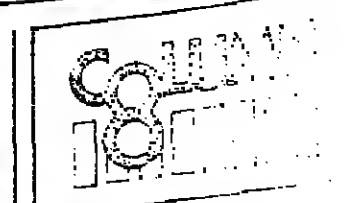
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## Court still in sentence on teenage rapist

LONDON (AP) — A court sentenced a 17-year-old convicted rapist to a three-year imprisonment on Tuesday, an earlier ruling that he should pay for a schoolgirl victim who cannot be named in British law — had been overturned.

"So serious that it is a custodial sentence," the court judge said.

The boy was convicted of raping the girl after she was taken to the school in 1991. They both attended the Crown Court in London. The youth is 17 years old and was ordered to pay a victim £500 (US\$1,000) holiday. That sum had been attracted from a fund set up to help victims of rape.

## Painting bought for \$3 set for sale

NEW YORK (AP) — A painting of two hummingbirds, an American tourist bought about \$3 at a flea market in England, fetched \$84,997 at auction block in Chicago on Tuesday.

The painting, which was bought by a woman who works for a law firm outside Bristol, England, was the first of a series of paintings by a man named John Constable, who lived in the 18th century. The painting was bought by a woman who works for a law firm outside Bristol, England, and was the first of a series of paintings by a man named John Constable, who lived in the 18th century.

## Hoaxer who presented French TV news arrested

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## Xylitol gum helps repair children's cavities — study

CHICAGO (R) — A study by researchers at the University of Illinois found that children who chewed regular gum with xylitol, a natural sweetener, had fewer cavities than those who did not.

The study, which was conducted over a period of six months, found that children who chewed xylitol gum had a 30 per cent reduction in cavities compared to those who did not.

The researchers said that xylitol is a natural sweetener that is found in many fruits and vegetables. It is also a sugar substitute that is commonly used in chewing gum.